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# The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism

Curzon Press

Rune E. A. Johansson

# THE DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY OF EARLY BUDDHISM

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# The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism

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*Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies*
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## PREFACE

This book is a psychologist's attempt to understand what the Buddha meant by "dependent origination" (*paṭiccasamuppāda*, sometimes translated by "causality"). Everybody familiar with Theravāda Buddhism has met this famous series of twelve links, of which each is said to be a condition of the next one, and probably felt more or less puzzled:

1. *Avijjā*, "ignorance"
2. *Sankhārā*, "activities", "*kamma*-formations"
3. *Viññāṇa*, "consciousness"
4. *Nāmarūpa*, "name and form", "mentality and corporality"
5. *Saḷāyatana*, "the six sense-modalities"
6. *Phassa*, "contact", "sense-impression"
7. *Vedanā*, "feeling"
8. *Taṇhā*, "craving"
9. *Upādāna*, "clinging"
10. *Bhava*, "becoming"
11. *Jāti*, "rebirth"
12. *Maraṇa*, "death"

The background of this book is exactly the challenging, teasing incomprehensibility of this series. Many of the terms and connections seem familiar and reasonable to a psychologist, for instance consciousness, the six sense-modalities, impression, feeling, craving. They seem to belong to his field. The senses must, of course, be able to function if an impression is to be produced; a blind man will have no visual impression. It is also clear that the impression can be experienced as pleasant; if so, it may become an object of desire. But is then also the rest of the series psychological? How can activities give rise to con-

sciousness? What kind of activities? And what is "*kamma*-formations", which some translators prefer as equivalent to *saṅkhārā*? And how can ignorance be a condition of activities? Will a man with knowledge do nothing at all? If *rūpa* in *nāmarūpa* means "corporality", how can consciousness give rise to something physical? *Upādāna* is said to mean "clinging" which would mean a more persistent form of craving, but when this is said to condition "becoming" and "birth" (there is no "re-" in *jāti*), some explanation is needed. We are not used to the thought that a wish, however strong, will produce anything by itself. Even the word *bhava* seems obscure; why is it differentiated from *jāti*? Has it a meaning of its own? Has it any psychological significance or is there again a change of dimension? And what actually is *jāti*? Is it the historical fact of the next birth? If so, should not also other terms refer to historical events? When I think of consciousness, I think of the conscious aspect of my self; I have a stream of conscious processes throughout my life; it is a factor of my personality, not only a single act. Now, if "birth" refers to an event, would we not expect the other terms to be of the same type? We would then expect "a conscious act" instead of "consciousness", etc. What series of events would then produce rebirth? The series becomes still more mysterious, if we take the three-life theory of Buddhaghosa seriously; this implies that the transition from the former to the present life is effected through *viññāṇa*, but the transition to the next life through *upādāna*; why this difference? It also makes the series impossible to use as a practical tool - as the Buddha had intended it to be - since the "ignorance" of my former life can no longer be eradicated and the whole series therefore never nullified.

These are some of the problems that lay behind the investigation described in this book. My method has been to collect all passages in the Nikāya literature which could throw some light on the meaning of the terms of this, and also all similar conditioned sequences. I have tried to accept only explanations that I think agree with all the facts in the Nikāyas. I think that the only aim of Early Buddhism was a certain transformation of the human individual personality and that the *paṭiccasamuppāda*

is both an explanation and a prescription. Therefore, an attempt to understand this and similar sequences from a modern psychological point of view should not be hopeless.

I have found that the greatest stumbling-blocks to what I believe to be a correct understanding are the two terms *sankhāra* and *rūpa*. They have forced me to an investigation into the cultural background of Buddhism, since they do not agree with modern ways of thinking. I have found that the dynamic aspect of the Buddha's psychology must have been much more extreme and all-pervading than is usually believed today. The principal factor in his psychology seems to have been perception, and his interpretation is truly and uncompromisingly dynamic.

I begin the book by describing the psychological background of Buddhism. Then a chapter is devoted to the dynamic foundations and the nature of the dynamic act. In the following chapters most of the terms included in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series and some others are analysed. There are chapters about consciousness, the Buddhist theory of development (*upādāna*, *bhava*, *jāti*), the perceptual process and motivation. Then the significance of the whole series is explained in a chapter headed "Personality", which also deals with the nature of the mind and the ego illusion. The last three chapters are devoted to factors which do not form part of the standard series but belong to similar sequences or are in other ways connected with such series: the *āsavā* (usually translated "influxes", "obsessions"), thoughts and associations (*vitakka*, *papañca*) and understanding (*paññā*). Throughout the book some attention has been given to the practical problem, how the factors discussed are affected by meditation and how they are related to the attainment of *nibbāna*.

The investigation has been performed in Sri Lanka, where I found a stimulating intellectual climate for a work of this type. This is a good opportunity for me to express my gratefulness for all assistance given to me, by the Ministry of Education, the University of Sri Lanka (particularly Prof. N.A. Jayawickrama, Prof. M.W. Padmasiri de Silva and Mr. P.D. Premasiri), Mr. B. Cooke, Mr. G. Samararatne, and many others. I have also received much encouragement and valuable ideas from members of the Sangha, especially Ven. Nyanaponika Mahathera,

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# CHAPTER 1

## THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Probably the reader, like the present writer, is educated according to Western principles and shares the Western view of the world. This means, among other things, that he makes a clear distinction between a physical world and his own subjective experiences. He believes in a material reality, governed by physical laws and existing quite independently of his experience of it. He knows that his own perceptions are just unstable and inconsistent images of it, falsified by unclarities, misconceptions and wishful thinking. He believes in a lawful stability behind the bewildering surface. And the laws are mechanical and have nothing to do with purpose and morality.

Buddhist psychology cannot be clearly understood from this intellectualist point of departure, since it is based on a very different view. So we will have to change our mental attitude. This can be done, since most of us have lived the first few years of our lives with very different ideas in our heads.

Western psychologists (I am here following Piaget, 1965, and Werner, 1948) have tried to map out the view of the world spontaneously formed by small children. The child is of course born without any knowledge and with very immature sense organs. As the organs begin to function, the child will experience his personal states and his surroundings. He will see objects, hear sounds, etc. But for several years he will not make any clear distinction between his personal images and the physical objects. He will believe that his conscious experience and the external objects are identical, since he knows only the former. This means, for instance, that his fantasies and dreams will be interpreted as real, objective events. He may feel powerful enough to create objects, since he can produce an image of them by just imagining them or dreaming about them. He can make

things disappear by closing his eyes or ceasing to think of them. He believes that others can read his thoughts.

But just as the mental image is felt to be identical with the object, the name of an object cannot be distinguished from the object itself. Children are usually anxious to learn the names of things, because they feel that the name gives a better understanding of them and even power over them.

Things, especially moving things, are frequently felt to be alive, and consciousness and intentions are attributed to them. The sun and the moon especially, are felt to be conscious and friendly beings. But there are also evil-minded things: the stone he stumbles over, the wall he bumps his head into, the recalcitrant shoe, etc.

During the first stage of development no clear distinction is made between the world and the own self. The self is not limited. The self is felt to be powerful and all-important. It can command the parents but also the sun and the clouds. The child also feels the power of his own needs, and since he believes in connections between everything, he will try to influence his environment by magical means. He will for instance ensure success at school by touching certain spots on his way, by counting rapidly according to certain rules or using a special pencil. Or he will try to obtain a cherished end by sacrificing a treasured toy or by performing some painful or tiresome action.

Although things are often felt to be alive and have a will of their own, they are also frequently believed to have duties and to be governed by a moral purpose. The duties are usually to serve human beings and especially himself. A belief in a moral world order comes easily to the child.

These are a few of the most frequently found beliefs of a young child. What is the background of their appearance?

The most important reason is probably to be found in the way perception and consciousness function. As William James has observed, the infant is conscious only of a "big, blooming, buzzing confusion" (Vernon, 1962, p.17). While maturity and experience will soon make the environment less confusing, much of the confusion is still present in the adult perception, and,

as a matter of fact, religion, philosophy and science can be understood as different attempts to overcome it and achieve some degree of stability, explanation and security.

Each perceptual act can be analysed into at least three factors: the preliminary readiness, the stimulus, and the interpretation. Usually we see only when we are looking for something; perception is rarely an impartial registration of facts. Rather we tend to see what we are looking for or ready for.

Every perception builds on a mosaic of nervous impressions released by external stimuli. But these stimuli are often ambiguous and confusing. They usually change rapidly, depending on the movements of the object and the perceiver, changing distances, perspectives and illumination. The two eyes frequently give different impressions, which must somehow be brought into harmony. Colour and size are changed in some types of surroundings and may be accentuated by contrast. Imperfections in the sense organs produce some degree of distortions.

The interpretation is always a subjective creation and is influenced by many personal factors. Personal needs decide to a great extent what is perceived and how it is interpreted. The world therefore becomes personal and ego-related. The visual apparatus needs only a very faint impression in order to recognize a valuable or dangerous object; things without interest are perceived very vaguely or not at all. Valuable or frightening things are seen as bigger than they really are, neutral things as smaller. These characteristics of our perception are usually valuable, since they serve our vital needs - but they may play us bad tricks, especially when needs and feelings are strong. In a stone or tree-trunk we may seem to recognize a friend, or a person long since dead - or even a frightening devil. When we close the eyes we may get an after-image of any strong impression. In this case an image is produced by a previous, no longer present stimulus. But most people can create an inner visual world without any impression at all, for instance in dreams, or in remembering persons or scenes or when imagining future happiness and disasters.

Human perception is governed by needs. The perceived

objects are therefore loaded with feelings. They are subjective experiences but are usually projected upon the objects: you can see the aggressiveness in the tiger or the bull and the danger threatening you in the lightning or the water torrent. All things seem to express the value you attach to them: your feelings are interpreted as direct perceptions of qualities in the object. The world is a human world: it is there to satisfy or frustrate needs. It has a face; it is physiognomic.

All this[1] is valid for all perceptions, but most grown-up persons have learnt to correct them and cope with them. Children on the other hand believe that the world is as it is experienced; they know only their conscious experiences. To them there is also no clear difference between perceptions and subjective images. The world to the child becomes homogeneous and continuous, not dualistic.

Since the child sees his world as homogeneous, he sees himself justified in drawing conclusions by analogy. He moves and is alive, so all moving things are alive. He has intentions and needs, therefore other things also have them. He can see the things, so they can see him. Nature becomes populated by personal, living forces, friendly or unfriendly.

The characteristics of immediate perception and analogical thinking probably can explain why the childish view of the world is so unrealistic, magical and egocentric as it is. Normally, this view changes as the child grows up. His senses become more mature and he collects experiences. His growing intelligence permits him to detect laws that were not apparent to him at first and to detect the limits of his own self. In this way, the world becomes more stable. But, still more important, he acquires a language and learns from the experience and knowledge of other people. Especially, children who grow up in an educated Western environment get a radical correction indeed. They learn that many of the changes given by perception are illusory and that every change can be explained by physical causes, and they learn to see the world as stable and lawful and to disregard their perceptions to a great extent. They learn to make an absolute distinction between the "objective" world and their "private" world, between the external world and the "self" -

although they still may be misled by illusions and errors of thought, and sometimes may permit their world to be transformed by strong feelings and needs.

But what happens in pre-scientific cultures? These cultures, for instance the Indian culture at the time of the Buddha, consist in traditions and religions ultimately derived from immediate perception and rationalisations of information obtained through immediate perception. Since the child naturally sees the world as living and purposeful, he will also as adult find it easy to believe that it is governed by gods and spirits: these to him will become stabilizing forces which can explain much of the inconsistencies and changes which his senses leave unexplained. Magic may continue to seem a realistic way to solve problems. And the belief in a soul and survival after death will rescue him from the sense of instability and impermanence which he detects in his conscious processes - and from the frustrations inflicted upon him by the social environment. The anthropocentric tendencies in child-thinking make it easy for the grown-up to believe in a moral world-order, according to which human behaviour is important not only for the future of the individual himself but also for the world at large. They permit him to use the same means to cope with the supernatural powers as he has learnt to use in his intercourse with fellow men: flattery, sacrifices, prayers, contracts. If he feels strong enough or knows a secure method he may even try to force them.

Still, in many pre-scientific cultures some individuals are found who are not satisfied with the stability offered by the traditional religious interpretations. They are looking for more general laws than their religion can offer, and by their speculative efforts a philosophy is created. If even the laws formulated by philosophers prove unsatisfactory, ultimately an experimental science may be initiated.

## The Buddha and his Background

All these developments can be found in India at the time of the Buddha - even the rudiments of experimental thinking. Many

of the popular beliefs of that time are described in the Buddhist Nikāyas themselves, and it often remains uncertain to what extent they were incorporated into Buddhism or just tolerated.

Nature was considered to be alive, or animated by gods, fairies, devils and ghosts. When Sakka, the ruler of the gods, touched the earth with his hand to call it to witness (D II 288), this means that the earth was treated as a living being. In D II 319, Kassapa, a disciple of the Buddha, agrees that the sun and the moon are gods. D II 87 mentions a place which was inhabited by "fairies who haunted in thousands the plots of ground there". One of the songs of the Sutta Nipāta (v. 222 etc.) is addressed to the "spirits of earth and sky who are gathered here", and they are asked to be friendly and listen carefully. Rain is produced by a god: "so if you wish, god, let it rain" (SN 18).

In addition to the innumerable anonymous spirits who animate nature, there were a number of more individualized higher gods, described in an elaborate mythology. In early Buddhist sources we find at least two long lists of gods who were considered important in the social environment where Buddhism arose, namely in suttas No. 20 and 32 of the Dīgha Nikāya (D II 233 ff and D III 194 ff). The former enumerates first the spirits of the earth and the mountains, and then, to mention a few of them, the gandhabbas, the nāgas, some of the highest gods, Vishnu, Sakka and Brahmā and finally the evil-minded Māra, the god of death and temptation.

All these spirits and gods were not neutral to man: they were, rather, centred around man, chiefly interested in his destiny. They were all powerful and therefore potentially dangerous. Some were friendly and helpful towards man and could be used as allies. The great assembly of gods just referred to had come in order to visit the Buddha and the Order of monks. The group of gods called the Four Great Kings "perambulate the world to see whether many folk pay reverence to mother and father, to recluses and brahmins" etc. (A I 142). The chief god Sakka was actually converted to the teachings of the Buddha (D II 288). But gods, spirits and demons generally are bound by the fetters

of envy and selfishness (D II 276), they do not abstain from taking life, from theft, unchastity, lying and intemperance (D III 195). Therefore, most of them do not believe in the Buddha (D III 194 f). Even Sakka himself "was not rid of passion, malice and illusion", he "was not released from birth, old age and death, from sorrow, lamentation and woe" (A I 144).

Forms and material density are not definitive but changing. Māra, for instance, excels in transformations. S I 103 - 119 describes a number of tricks devised to deceive or frighten the Buddha, how he turned himself into the likeness of an approaching king-elephant, a snake, and a bullock, and how he sent many huge rocks crashing down and made a terrible noise. This power of transforming oneself is attributed also to human beings who have practised meditation. Abhibhu, who lived in a former age, is said to have travelled to the Brahmā-world in order to preach the doctrine to Brahmā himself. And he "continued to preach now with a visible, now with an invisible body, now with a body the lower half only of which was visible, now with a body, the upper half only of which was visible" (S I 156). Through *iddhi*, "magic power", a monk can multiply himself, go unhindered through a wall, or stroke the sun and moon with his hands (see, e.g. M II 18). Or he can create winds and thunderstorms (S IV 289) or fire (S IV 290). The Buddha had both a body made up of the four elements and a *manomaya* (mind-made) body. The gods are usually *manomaya* or *saññāmaya* (made from ideation) (M I 410). This means that they vary in density: mind-made beings may become solid by eating solid food (D III 86). Gods are not always visible to each other, because they are of different density (D II 210). Once, a *deva* came to the Buddha, "but he sank down, collapsed, could not stand upright" (A I 278). The Buddha asked him to create a gross body-form (*oḷārikaṃ attabhāvaṃ*); he did so and was able to stand upright. Even life and death are relative: Kora lay dead in the charnel field. Sunakkhatta went up to him, slapped him with his hand and said: 'Do you know your destiny?' And Kora, "rubbing his back with his hand, raised himself up and said '... I am reborn among the Kālakañjas ...' So saying, he fell back supine" (D III 8).

Since the gods and spirits are powerful, they must be pro-

pitiated. But since they are dependent on food and like praise, they can be manipulated. They are bound by rules and can therefore even be subjugated. Human beings are quite resourceful and can develop irresistible powers.

The oldest method is the sacrifice. Food, drink and animals were offered, and the ritual followed during these offerings became more and more elaborate. They finally had to be performed by a special class of people, the brahmins or priests, for only specialists could remember and rightly follow all the rules.

Another method is prayers and spells. There is strong power in words, because the word is part of the reality it signifies. This part may represent or provoke the whole, the real thing. The power of spells is admitted also in the Buddhist scriptures. Once a group of seers were afraid of the Asuras and went to Sambara, their king, and asked for protection (S I 227). When this was refused, they laid a curse upon him. And Sambara "that very night woke up thrice seized with terror". In D III 194 ff, king Vessavana teaches the Buddha a protective spell against *yakkhas* (demons). And SN 983 quotes another spell: "If you don't give me what I ask, your head will be split into seven pieces on the seventh day!" Prayers to gods are very frequently quoted in the earlier Vedic literature but are rare in the oldest Buddhist scriptures. The method is, however, mentioned in D III 204, where a number of gods are enumerated to whom appeal should be made if a monk or disciple is molested by *yakkhas*.

According to the ancient Indian view, the world was one and indivisible. Everything was connected with everything, and no chance or coincidence existed. Human behaviour formed the centre around which everything revolved. Therefore, correct behaviour was considered extremely important. See, for instance, A II 74 f: "At such times as kings are unrighteous, the ministers of kings are also unrighteous. When ministers are unrighteous, brahmins and householders are also unrighteous. Thus townsfolk and villagers are unrighteous. This being so, moon and sun go wrong in their courses. This being so, constellations and stars do likewise; days and nights, months and fortnights, seasons and years are out of joint; the winds blow wrong, out of season. Thus the gods are annoyed. When this occurs, the sky-god will not bestow sufficient rain. Rains not falling

seasonably, the crops ripen in the wrong season. When crops ripen in the wrong season, men who live on such crops are short-lived, ill-favoured, weak and sickly". The importance of human beings for the stability of the world order cannot be expressed more clearly. A people that follows certain moral rules cannot be conquered in open battle, but possibly by cunning. This was at least predicted about the Vajjians (A IV 16 ff). If a monk abuses fellow monks, he will certainly meet with one of eleven types of disaster: he may, for instance, commit some offence, become seriously ill or insane, or come to Purgatory after death (A V 317 f). When people follow wrong cravings and have wrong views, it will not rain properly and the crops become bad (A I 160).

There is a correlation between all desirable traits. A good man has also correct knowledge about others (M III 21 ff). The fool is affected by fears, troubles and misfortunes, not the wise man (A III 61).

By the time of the Buddha, a new method of gaining power and knowledge and of manipulating the gods had become common, namely asceticism (*tapas*). "Just as the sacrificer was supposed, by a sort of charm that his priests worked for him in the sacrifice, to compel the gods, and to attain the ends he desired, so there was supposed to be a sort of charm in *tapas* by which a man could, through and by himself, attain to mystic and marvellous results" (Rhys Davids, 1971, p. 242). Especially "mystic, extraordinary, superhuman faculties ... were attained by *Tapas*" (Rhys Davids, 1971, p. 243). This was the way the Buddha himself followed in his youth. In M I 77 f, he has mentioned some of his ascetic practices: "I was unclothed, flouting life's decencies, licking my hands ... I took food only once a day, and once in two days ... and once in seven days. I was one who plucked out the hair of his head and beard, ... I became one who stood upright, refusing a seat ..." But he was not able, in this way, to attain the promised fruits of these practices: "I, by this severe austerity, did not reach the superhuman power, the excellent knowledge and vision befitting the nobles" (M I 246). He, therefore, abandoned this method of solving his problems and never admitted that anything could be attained by

it. But he kept and developed certain meditative methods which he had learnt from his teachers. It was felt that by concentrating the will or creating a clear and persistent mental image, a real force could be created by which information could be acquired or the world changed: "while living diligent, ardent, self-resolute, we perceive light-manifestation as well as the appearance of material shapes" (M III 157). "Whenever the Tathāgata concentrates body in mind and mind in body ... at such time the Tathāgata's body with but little effort rises up from the ground into the air. He then enjoys in various ways manifold forms of magic power (*iddhi*), thus: From being one he becomes many", etc. (S V 284). These magic powers could be attained only through concentration (*samādhi*), calm and one-pointedness (*ekodhibhāva*) (A III 425). S I 144 tells how the Buddha "read by his mind the mind of Brahmā" (*brahmuno cetasā ceto-parivitakkam aññāya*) and went to the Brahmā world and took his seat cross-legged in the air above Brahmā, "flames radiating from his body", and how several of his disciples observed this and went after him to the Brahmā world, "flames radiating from their bodies". And, according to D II 108, "a recluse or a brahmin with magic power (*iddhi*) who has his mind well controlled ... may, by intense concentration on the image of the minutest portion of earth and on the image of the widest expanse of water, make this earth move and tremble". Through *iddhi*, a fire may be kindled (M II 203).

Mind-reading was considered a normal way of collecting information, and there are innumerable references to this practice. In S II 275 it is told how Mahā-Moggallāna, one of the most prominent disciples of the Buddha, had spent his day, namely by discussing the doctrine with his teacher. However, the Buddha was at that time residing far away. "I did not go to the Master by *iddhi*, neither did he come to me. Nevertheless even as in him, so also in me the divine eye and the divine ear (*dibbacakkhu, dibbā ca sotadhātu*) are purified". In A I 148, a monk reflects thus: "If I, who went forth thus from home to the homeless life, should indulge in sensual, malicious, or harmful thoughts ... surely in this great company there are recluses and brahmins, possessed of supernormal powers, clairvoyant, able

to read the thoughts of others. Even from afar they can see me. Though close at hand they may be invisible and they can read my mind with theirs". Direct vision and hearing are therefore possible, even at great distances. Frequently, we read that "the Master, with superhuman divine ear heard this conversation" (e.g. M I 502).

There is evidence to show that these powers can be derived from the power experienced in the subjective volitional processes and from the clarity of the mental images. What the monk Anuruddha saw, as told in A IV 262 f, was clearly a subjective vision. he was visited by a number of fairies who spoke to him. Then Anuruddha wished them to "become all blue, with blue faces, blue garments", etc. And so it happened. Then he wanted them to take on a yellow colour; and they did so. And they took on a white colour, when he wished so. But when they finally started to sing and dance, Anuruddha decided to control his senses (*indriyāni okkhipi*), and the fairies disappeared. These fairies were subjective visions, and could therefore be controlled. Consider also D II 108, quoted above, where the success of the attempt to make the earth tremble is said to depend on the intense concentration on certain images: experienced power is considered to be objective power. The body can be made weightless by fusing it with mind, because the mind is something subtle, weightless and freely moving (see S V 284, already quoted). In D III 27, the Buddha tells how he, "by entering the fire-element" (*tejo-dhātum samāpajjitvā*, probably referring to a form of meditation, consisting of strong visualization of light) "rose into the air to the height of seven palm trees, and projected a flame the height of another seven palm trees, so that it blazed and glowed". And, finally, in M III 178, the Buddha tells how he "can see beings as they are passing hence, as they are coming to be": "it is as if there were two houses with doors and a man with vision standing there between them might see people entering a house and leaving it and going back and forth and walking across". From this simile it becomes evident that he got his knowledge in the form of visual mental images. It is also very enlightening to follow his account of how he learnt to see and collect information about the gods (A IV 302 f): at first he could only see light

(*obhāsa*) but no forms (*rūpāni*); then forms appeared, but he still could not stand with or talk to the gods; later he became able to do these things, and finally he became informed about different communities of gods, about their food, experiences, their lives and lifespan, etc. This is a very plausible description of how a subjective vision is developed: it begins vaguely, as light; vague images appear; these are fixed and clarified, and explanatory associations are added. This is not the way we perceive and become acquainted with material visitors.

The time of the Buddha seems to have been a time of intellectual freedom and uninhibited speculation. Numerous teachers wandered around or set up schools teaching their speculative doctrines, and the Buddha frequently engaged in discussions with them. One of the suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya (D I 17-40) mentions a great number of speculative views. The subjects discussed were especially the nature of the soul and the world, the nature of virtue and its results, the existence of another world, and whether the soul and the world are caused or not. There were - just to mention a few examples - the eternalists, who believed in the endless existence of the world and the soul or distinguished between an impermanent part of the self and an eternal part. There were the annihilationists, who maintained that nothing remains after death. There were the extensionists who believed that the world is without limit, and those who denied this. Some believed in a future reward for good actions and punishment for bad actions, while others thought otherwise. And there were also a group called "eel-wrigglers" who refused to commit themselves in any of the main issues. All these teachers seem to have based their theories mainly on logical reasoning oɪ insights acquired during meditative states. They did not refer to authorities or religious tradition.

In the Pali literature we find even the rudiments of experimental thinking. D II 316-357 relates a discussion between one of the Buddha's disciples and the chieftain Pāyāsi. The latter denies the existence of a soul (*jīva*), and one of the reasons he refers to is this. Suppose we catch a criminal and decide to punish him by throwing him alive into a jar, close it with wet leather and cover it with a thick layer of moist clay and then put it into a fire. Suppose further that when the man

is dead we take out the pot, open it carefully and quickly try to detect the soul coming out - but no soul would come out! Or, if we rather prefer to strangle the criminal, we could weigh him carefully both before the execution and after: would he weigh less when the soul has gone away? No, according to Pāyāsi he would be as heavy when dead! So he had no soul that could pass out.

The discussion is interesting because the experimental idea is clearly expressed. Probably the experiments were never carried out, and no experimental science was initiated. But the principle was at least formulated, an indication that some brains at this time were dissatisfied both with the traditional religions and with the speculative attempts to find general laws. The Buddha himself seems to have accepted many of the popular ideas prevalent at his time. The existence of gods was natural to him - he saw them and spoke to them frequently. But more important to him was his firm belief in a moral world order, to which also the gods were subjected. The chief function of the gods was to keep the moral balance by helping, punishing and tempting. The moral law was to him an inbuilt, natural force, functioning automatically and valid even for the gods: even their actions bear fruit according to their qualities, either in the present life or later. He considered the human being as essentially free and therefore largely independent of the gods. For this reason he could reject most of the religious practices of his contemporaries: sacrifices, rites, spells, prayers and asceticism:

> "Not flesh of fish, nor fasting, nakedness,
> The shaven head, the matted hair, nor sweat,
> Nor rough-skin garb, nor solemn celebration
> Of sacrificial fire, nor signal penance
> Of those who here seek immortality:
> Not hymns, oblations, rites, feasts of the season
> Will cleanse a man with doubt not overcome."
>
> (SN 249, translation by Hare)

Prayers are rarely mentioned but declared ineffective in A III 47: long life, beauty, happiness, honour, the heaven-

worlds cannot be obtained either by vows or prayers (*na āyācanahetu vā na patthanāhetu vā*). Spells may be effective, but not if directed against a person of right view or high moral stature: In M II 155 the story is told how a group of brahman seers tried a spell on the seer Asita Devata, saying: "Become a vile cinder!" - with the opposite effect, since he only became more beautiful. The Buddha also rejected as "low" (lit. "brutish": *evarūpāya tiracchānavijjāya paṭivirato Samaṇo Gotamo*) a long list of practices which evidently were common during his time: palmistry, astrological predictions, divining by means of omens and signs, or by interpreting dreams, fortune-telling from marks on the body etc. (D I 9). Even the old word for priest, *brāhmaṇa*, was given a completely new meaning by him: "A brahman one becomes through austerity, chastity, self-control, restraint" (SN 655), and not through birth. Instead of sacrifices to gods he advocated gifts to the order of monks.

But he rejected also all types of philosophical speculation: "Let him not fashion in the world a view (*diṭṭhi*), neither from knowledge nor from rule or rite!" (SN 799). "For the brahman .... who knows and sees there is no accepted view" (SN 795).

This means also that he rejected the theory of a permanent entity within the human personality. Although he accepted the idea of rebirth, he could not find a transmitted entity. Bereft of these two stabilising factors, the gods and the soul, he chose a very different way to security. As will be described in this book, he chose to accept the perceptual world in all its richness just as it appeared to be: endless sequences of conscious processes. He saw them as conditioning each other and ultimately depending on and produced by the individual mind. Because of this dependence and because of the ultimately moral nature of the whole world, he could go on to find methods of controlling the whole process and thus escape all frustrating experiences. His main methods were meditation and understanding.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE ONE REALITY

Western science tries to make a clear distinction between a material and a psychological reality. There is according to this view a material world quite independent of our senses. The objective existence of this physical world can be ascertained through side-stepping our senses, by means of scientific devices. How to find out the ultimate nature of these material objects is a different problem, not yet solved, but we are now certain that what we call the material world is not pure illusion. Something is "out there" independent of us.

A different kind of reality would be a picture of an object; it is of course a material object but not independent. A photograph of my house is not the same as the house itself but also not independent of it. It is not a perfect replica of the house but has borrowed certain relations from it.

We also speak about mental pictures, a kind of images formed in our minds when we see an object. They are presumably built up through processes in the sense organs and the nervous system, but it is still not known how this is done. Certain information from the object, in the form of, for instance, wave lengths and light intensities and spatial relations, is transformed to nervous messages which are integrated in the central nervous system and represented in the end result of a conscious image. The perceptual image is certainly a very incomplete representation, or rather transposition, of the received stimuli, but we take it for granted that there is a correct correspondence. In spite of this, it seems to the Western mind that the gap between the nervous processes and the experienced "image" is unbridgeable. The latter is a "conscious" fact, the former a "material" fact; they are frequently called two incomparable dimensions.

Still more purely "conscious" would we call an image that we produce through memory alone or imagination or dream alone. In these cases there are no direct external stimuli, only "traces" of such stimuli stored or produced within the nervous system. These images are usually less clear and concrete and have fewer details than perceptual images, but dreams and visions may be very vivid and rich in details.

Possibly the Western dichotomy between "material reality" and mental images is exaggerated or even false. Our nervous system has the power and resources to create images from external patterns of information or from information stored in the nervous system itself - *and* to give it a meaning: these experiences may *be* the patterned processes themselves in the nervous system, perhaps within special association centres. They would in that case belong to the same type of "reality" as all other processes, physiological or physical.

For the time being, there is no solution to the problem; we do not know how the physical and the psychological dimensions are related to each other. The distinction between them is of course meaningful and practically necessary. However, the early Buddhist view on these matters was different.

The distinction was clearly made: "This body of mine, formed, made of the four elements, originated from mother and father, nourished on gruel and sour milk ..., and this consciousness of mine is fastened there, bound there" (*Ayaṃ kho me kāyo rūpī cātummahābhūtiko mātāpettikasambhavo odanakummāsūpacayo ..., idañ ca pana me viññāṇaṃ ettha sitaṃ ettha paṭibaddhaṃ*, M II 17). Here the same distinction seems to be made as when we contrast consciousness to body. A similar, clear distinction is made between *kāya*, "body", and *citta*, "mind", in A II 137, where it is said that these four persons are found: "the subdued in body but not in mind (*nikaṭṭhakāyo anikaṭṭhacitto*); the unsubdued in body but subdued in mind; he who is subdued in neither; he who is subdued in both". Body and mind are here conceived as independent variables; there need not be any correlation between the qualities of the two. Another example is that *kāya* may be ill without *citta* being affected (S III 1). In some cases, there may, however, be correlation. For instance, if *kāya* is tired, *citta* will be

disturbed (*kāye kilante cittam ūhaññeyya*, M I 116).

A similar clear distinction also seems to be made in the most common descriptions of perception. Visual perception is created through the contact (*phassa*) of three agents: *rūpa*, "form", *cakkhu*, "eye", and *cakkhuviññāṇa*, "visual consciousness" (S IV 86). In this combination, *rūpa* must refer to the external object.

With regard to feelings, a similar distinction is made between bodily (*kāyika*) and mental (*cetasika*) pleasures (A I 81) and pains (D II 306).

But from these distinctions it does not follow that the two types of reality were considered as basically different. In fact, the relation between the two soon becomes complicated when investigated more closely. In our attempt to clarify the matter, we will first analyse the words *loka*, "world", and *rūpa*, "form", and then collect some evidence from descriptions of meditative experiences.

## The World

*Loka* is the normal word for "world". A distinction between the apparent world and the "real" world was made in early Buddhism: In S V 304, Anuruddha, who was one of the Buddha's chief disciples, says: "By cultivating these four applications of mindfulness I know the world as it really is, with its many and various elements" .(*Imesaṃ...catunnaṃ satipaṭṭhānānaṃ bhāvitattā ... anekadhātuṃ nānādhātuṃ lokaṃ yathābhūtaṃ pajānāmi*). It is implied that the layman's ordinary perception will not give true knowledge about the world. To think that "this world does not exist and there is no world beyond" (*n'atthi ayaṃ loko, n'atthi paro loko*), is frequently called a false view (*micchā-diṭṭhi*) by the Buddha, e.g. A I 268 f. But to maintain simply that it exists is also wrong: "He who with right understanding sees the arising of the world as it really is, cannot attribute non-existence to the world; he who with right insight sees the passing away of the world as it really is, cannot attribute existence to the world" (*Lokasamudayaṃ...yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato yā loke natthitā sā na hoti; lokanirodhaṃ...yathābhūtaṃ*

*sammappaññāya passato yā loke atthitā sā na hoti*, S II 17). And the text goes on: "Everything exists - this is one extreme. Nothing exists - this is the other extreme. Not approaching either extreme the Tathāgata teaches a doctrine in between: Conditioned by ignorance activities come to pass ... " The whole *paṭiccasamuppāda* series follows, offered as an explanation of how the world is produced and annihilated.

This explanation is further qualified by other texts. SN 169 says: "the world has arisen through the six (senses, or sense-modalities), it gives rise to knowledge (i.e. is known) through the six; building on the six, the world is destroyed in the six" (*Chassu loko samuppanno, chassu kubbati santhavaṃ, channam eva upādāya chassu loko vihaññati*). In S IV 95 Ānanda declares, "Through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the inner sense one is conscious of the world, has conceit of the world. That is called 'world' in the code of the noble one" (*Cakkhunā ... sotena ... ghānena ... jivhāya ... kāyena ... manena ... lokasmiṃ lokasaññī hoti lokamānī, ... ayaṃ vuccati ariyassa vinaye loko*). This probably means that the world is the perceived world. In A II 48, the Buddha declares: "In this very fathom-long body, with its perception and inner sense, I proclaim the world to be, likewise the origin of the world and the destruction of the world, likewise the method leading to the destruction of the world" ( ... *imasmiṃ yeva byāmamatte kalebare saññimhi samanake lokañ ca paññāpemi lokasamudayañ ca lokanirodhañ ca lokanirodhagāminiṃ paṭipadam*). And in A IV 430 it is said: "These five love-objects are called the world in the code of the noble one. What five? Forms, cognized by the eye, longed for, alluring, pleasurable, lovely, bound up with passion and desire, sounds ..., smells ..., tastes ..., contacts ..." (*Pañc' ime ... kāmaguṇā ariyassa vinaye loko ti vuccati. Katame pañca? Cakkhuviññeyyā rūpā ... sotaviññeyyā saddā ... ghāna-viññeyyā gandhā ... jivhāviññeyyā rasā ... kāyaviññeyyā phoṭṭhabbā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasañhitā rajaniyā*).

All these quotations can probably be summed up in this way. There is no independently existing world. The world is a dynamic process, constantly being produced and deliberately constructed

by our senses, our thoughts, and our desires.[1] We build the world and we can also destroy it, simply by not needing it. This does not mean that we and the world are unreal or a mere illusion.[2] The objects are there but our perceptions of them are constituent and essential parts of them. The world must be taken seriously; all our ideations (*saññā*, i.e. perceptions and images) are true processes, and it is extremely difficult to control them or become independent of them. The achievement of independence, "destruction of the world", is the same as the achievement of nibbāna and is possible through meditation and understanding (*paññā*).

In order to understand this view correctly we must not forget that it is not mere subjectiveness. It is only that the cleavage into "objective" and "subjective" was never made; the subjective process of image-formation was thought to be part of the object itself. We are important for the creation of objects: "the world is brought up by the mind, swept away by the mind" (*cittena nīyati loko, cittena parikissati*, S I 39). If we do not need it, we will not create it and this is "the end of the world": and "there is no release from suffering without reaching the end of the world" (*na ca appatvā lokantaṃ dukkhā atthi pamocanaṃ*, A II 49).

In the same way, what we would call purely mental processes are also projected as real objects. When visions of gods and the *brahmā*-world are seen, e.g. in *samādhi*, it is because the gods and their worlds are real. They are there also when not seen, but our senses are not always clear and concentrated and the objects may change in degree of subtleness or "density".

## Form

*Rūpa*, "form", has seemingly several meanings. In this context only those of interest for our present problem will be discussed.

As already pointed out, *rūpa* may refer to external objects perceived by means of eye and consciousness. In texts which describe the perceptual process, e.g. S II 73, which will be quoted and discussed later, a difference between external ob-

jects (*rūpa*) and mental images (*dhamma*) seems to be pointed out. It should, however, in this context be noted that the parallelism between the six senses requires an independent existence of *dhamma* just as of *rūpa*, as if they were taken from a storehouse and brought in contact with *mano*, "the inner sense" (see Johansson, 1965, p. 205), and *manoviññāṇa*, "consciousness of the inner sense", i.e. the power to perceive mental images.

*Rūpa* is also a word for the human body. This becomes evident from a few quotations. "The four elements and the form depending on them is called body. From the arising of food comes the arising of body" (*Cattāro ca mahābhūtā catunnaṃca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ, idaṃ vuccati ... rūpaṃ. Āhārasamudayā rūpasamudayo*, S III 62). "This body is worn out, a nest of diseases and very frail" (*Parijiṇṇaṃ idaṃ rūpaṃ, roganiḍḍhaṃ pabhaṅguraṃ*, Dh 148), "a space that is enclosed by bones and sinews and flesh and skin is known as body" ( .. *aṭṭhiṃ ca paṭicca nahāruñ ca paṭicca maṃsañ ca paṭicca cammañ ca paṭicca ākāso parivārito rūpan t'eva saṅkhaṃ gacchati*, M I 190).

*Rūpa* may refer to an external, objective picture of an object. A man may, for instance bring paints and say: "I will draw forms in this space and make forms visible" (*Ahaṃ imasmiṃ ākāse rūpāni likhissāmi rūpapātubhāvaṃ karissāmīti*, M I 127). But since space is formless (*arūpī*), this is said to be a difficult task. Finally *rūpa* may refer to internal, mentally produced images. In D I 152, one Sunakkhatta is quoted as saying that he could see divine forms (*dibbāni rūpāni*) but not hear divine sounds. These forms were probably produced mentally, although considered real, since the Buddha comments that there are also divine sounds; they are real (*santāni*) and can be heard through proper practice of *samādhi*. D II 110 makes the distinction between personal and external forms (*ajjhattaṃ - bahiddhā*): "Somebody who is conscious of forms within sees forms externally" (*Ajjhattaṃ rūpa-saññī eko bahiddhā-rūpāni passati*). The Anuruddhas once reported: "When we stay diligent, ardent and self-resolute, we perceive light and a vision of forms" (*Idha mayaṃ ... appamattā ātāpino pahitattā viharantā obhāsañ c'eva sañjānāma dassanañ ca rūpānaṃ*, M III 157). All

these cases refer to experiences during exercises in meditation, where experiments in the production of subjective images frequently were made. The significance of these experiences will be discussed in another context; here we just want to exemplify that *rūpa* may stand for purely mental productions.

*Rūpa* occurs frequently in two contexts, namely as the first *khandha* (personality factor) and in the compound *nāma-rūpa* which is one of the links in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series. A discussion of these terms will take us to the very centre of Buddhist thought.

*Nāmarūpa* is said to be conditioned by *viññāṇa*, "consciousness", and is itself a condition of *phassa*, "contact". In S II 3 f, the following explanation is given: "Sensation, ideation, will, contact, attention - this is called name. The four elements and the form depending on them - this is called *rūpa*" (*Vedanā saññā cetanā phasso manasikāro, idaṃ vuccati nāmaṃ. Cattāro ca mahābhūtā catunnañca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ, idaṃ vuccati rūpaṃ*). The *nāma*-part has a certain similarity to the four last *khandha*-factors and consists of central psychological functions; the definition of *rūpa* is the same as was earlier quoted from a *khandha*-context. It is therefore probable that the meaning of *rūpa* is the same in both cases, namely "body".

So far, all seems simple enough, but there are complications, since the *nāmarūpa* is said to be conditioned by *viññāṇa*. How can the body be conditioned by consciousness? The explanation is probably this.

As will be discussed later, the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series has several purposes: one is to explain rebirth, another is to explain perception (both are aspects of suffering). The version we find in S II 73 clearly explains perception: "Owing to eye and *rūpa* eye-consciousness will arise. The coming together of the three is contact. Dependent on contact is sensation", etc. Since *rūpa* here has the plural form, it refers to perceptual objects, not to the physiological body. This version also ends with the origin of birth, etc., but then the comment is added: "This is the origin of the world" (*Ayaṃ lokassa samudayo*). In this case it is easy to understand how consciousness is a nec-

essary condition of the *nāma*-part of *nāmarūpa*; without an operating centre (agency) of consciousness, no conscious processes could take place.

We can understand consciousness as a condition of the body only if we understand that the body is also a perceptual object. "Why do you say 'body'? One is disturbed: therefore the word 'body' is used. Disturbed by what? Disturbed by cold and heat, by hunger and thirst, by contact with gnats, mosquitoes, wind and sun and snakes" (*Kiñca ... rūpaṃ vadetha? Ruppatīti kho ... tasmā rūpan ti vuccati. Kena ruppati? Sītena pi ruppati uṇhena pi ruppati jighacchāya pi ruppati pipāsāya pi ruppati ḍaṃsamakasa-vātātapa-siriṃsapa-samphassena pi ruppati*, S III 86).[3] The body is a collection of observed processes. Without *viññāṇa* there would be no consciousness of our own body, i.e. no body-processes. The body, as everything else, has only a conditional existence, it is continually created in *viññāṇa*.

It seems that D II 62 gives some further information about the relations between *nāma* and *rūpa*: "I have said that name-and-form is the condition of contact. Now in what way that is so, is to be understood after this manner. Those attributes, features, signs, indications, by which the *nāma*-part manifests itself, - if all these were absent, would there be any manifestation of a naming contact in the *rūpa*-part? - No. - Those attributes, features, signs, indications, by which the *rūpa*-part manifests itself, - if all these were absent, would there be any manifestation of a stimulus-contact in the *nāma*-part? - No." (*Yehi ... ākārehi yehi liṅgehi yehi nimittehi yehi uddesehi nāma-kāyassa paññatti hoti, tesu ākāresu tesu liṅgesu tesu nimittesu tesu uddesesu asati, api nu kho rūpa-kāye adhivacana-samphasso paññāyethāti? - No h'etaṃ ... - Yehi ... ākārehi yehi liṅgehi yehi nimittehi yehi uddesehi rūpa-kāyassa paññatti hoti, tesu ākāresu tesu liṅgesu tesu nimittesu tesu uddesesu asati, api nu kho nāma-kāye paṭigha-samphasso paññāyethāti? - No h'etaṃ ...*) This means, I think, that processes in the body produce stimulus-contact (*paṭigha-samphasso*) in the *nāma*-part, i.e. bodily processes become conscious by appropriate stimulation; in this way the body becomes conscious.

Without bodily functions, the mind would not be stimulated. And the *nāma*-part gives verbal contact (*adhivacana-samphasso*) in the *rūpa*-part, i.e. conscious processes (feelings, images, intensions) produce verbal associations which can be expressed by voice and gesture in *rūpa*, namely by means of bodily organs. Without psychological functions there would be no bodily expression. *Nāma* thus is the function of meaning and consciousness, and *rūpa* the function of expression.

This passage seems to express the close affinity and interdependence of *nāma* and *rūpa*. The body is known only through the mind.[4]

One of the main functions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series is then to explain perception. Another, the most well-known, is to explain rebirth. *Viññāṇa* is the seed (A I 223) that will grow if planted in the soil of *kamma* and watered by craving - and if some external conditions are also present. The text just quoted from D II 62 goes on to say: "Were consciousness not to descend into the mother's womb, would name-and-form become constituted therein? - No." (*Viññāṇaṃ ... mātu kucchiṃ na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ mātu kucchismiṃ samucchissathāti? - No h'etaṃ*, D II 63). Through the entry of the *viññāṇa* of a departed person into the womb of a suitable woman, the *nāma-rūpa* of a new individual is supposed to be constituted.

This seems to confirm our interpretation of *rūpa*. *Viññāṇa* can give rise to a material body, because there is no difference between the objective, material body and body as conscious processes. *Viññāṇa* may become conscious of body through stimulation but it also creates body through *mano* or *saññā*. During our life a "rebirth-personality" is built up (*pañcupādānakkhandhā upacayaṃ gacchanti*, M III 287), and especially the last mental image before death is said to be important for the next birth (M III 103). These *viññāṇa*-processes create a new material person. This is possible, because conscious processes and corresponding material processes are only different aspects of the same reality. *Viññāṇa* is not altogether "mental" in the Western sense, and *rūpa* is not altogether "material". There is no dualism in Buddhism.

The final conclusion to be drawn from our quotations from

Dīgha Nikāya is that the two functions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series are really identical, since they are both aspects of suffering. The series is conceived to explain the arising of perceptual, emotional and intentional processes; these processes are themselves called *jāti*, "birth", but they also *are* the formation of the next personality. But we anticipate; all this has to be discussed and proved in due course.

To sum up this section about *rūpa*, we have found a spectrum of meanings: external objects generally, and pictures of these, the physical body, mental images. In various contexts various aspects are stressed. But they are all just aspects of the same. There is no basic difference between subjective and objective.[5] *All* forms are constantly being created by our conscious processes which are part of the object. There is no object apart from the processes that constitute them. When *rūpa* is derived from the four elements, this is to be understood in the same way: even the elements are known only through perception and are of the same nature.

## Indications from the Experiences in Meditation

The above results are confirmed if we study the experiences made during meditation, especially *samādhi*. When the levels of *samādhi* are described, they are usually described as purely psychological states (A IV 448, D I 182 f). There is, however, plenty of evidence that the levels of *samādhi* were also thought to be real worlds, inhabited by gods and possible places to be reborn in. D III 263 mentions nine "abodes of beings" (*sattāvāsā*): (a) beings who are diverse both in body and in ideation, such as mankind, certain gods and some who have been doomed to suffering, (b) those diverse of body but uniform in ideation, such as gods of the Brahmā-world, reborn from the first *jhāna* (*paṭhamābhinibbattā*), (c) those uniform in body but diverse in ideation, such as the radiant gods, (d) those uniform both in body and ideation, such as the lustrous gods, (e) those without ideation and sensation, such as the unconscious gods, (f) those who have gone to the sphere of infinite space, (g) those who have gone

to the sphere of infinite consciousness, (h) to nothingness, (i) to the sphere of neither ideation nor freedom from ideation. Of these, b, e, f, g, h, i, live on the *samādhi* levels nos: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. In D I 195 these rebirth spheres are summarized in an interesting way. "There are these three attainments of personality (i.e. types of rebirth): material, mind-made, and formless. The first has form, is made up of the four elements and is nourished by solid food. The second has form, is mind-made, has all its greater and lesser limbs complete, and all the organs perfect. The third is without form, and is made up of ideation" (*Tayo kho ime ... atta-paṭilābhā, oḷāriko atta-paṭilābho, manomayo atta-paṭilābho, arūpo atta-paṭilābho ... Rūpī cātummahābhūtiko kabaḷinkārāhāra-bhakkho, ayam oḷāriko atta-paṭilābho ... Rūpī manomayo sabbanga-paccangī ahīnindriyo, ayaṃ manomayo atta-paṭilābho ... Arūpī saññāmayo, ayaṃ arūpo atta-paṭilābho*). The two last levels correspond to *samādhi* levels, and the terminology is interesting, since the beings on the second level are like humans but "mind-made", which probably means that they are made of more subtle, transparent matter like visions and images produced by the inner sense (*mano*). The beings on the third level are more abstract, formless, and made of ideation, which here seems to mean the vague visualizations (as we would call them) produced on the highest levels of *samādhi* ("the endless space", "the unlimited consciousness", "nothing exists"). Our quotations prove that these purely subjective states of consciousness, attained in *samādhi*, are projected as objective worlds, populated by gods with various characteristics. There is no difference in principle between a material world and one only visualized.

During *samādhi*, these beings can be seen. D I 220 mentions a monk who "attained so high a degree of *samādhi* (*tathārūpaṃ samādhiṃ samāpajji*) that with concentrated mind (*samāhite citte*) he could see the way to the Brahmā-world. And he went up to "the gods of the retinue of Brahmā" and spoke to them. D II 329 says that "the other world cannot ... be seen with this fleshly eye" (*Na ... paraloko daṭṭhabbo ... iminā maṃsa-cakkhunā*). But there are recluses and brahmins who live in remote places and by strenuous exercises purify the divine eye (*dibbaṃ cakkhuṃ*

*visodhenti*); "by that purified divine eye, surpassing the vision of men, they see both this world and the other world and beings not born of parents" (*imam eva lokam passanti paraṃ eva, satte ca opapātike*). This second assertion is offered as a proof of the real existence of another world and gods living there. Both passages show that these higher rebirth-worlds were taken seriously and that proper exercises would make it possible to see them and communicate with their inhabitants.

The passages quoted earlier from D II 110 and M III 157 were also selected from meditation contexts. They both refer to what we call visions, of heavenly forms, external forms, and light-manifestations. How real they seemed to be and how seriously they were taken can be understood through a comparison with a passage from D III 27: "I entered upon the fire-element (*tejo-dhātuṃ samāpajjitvā*) (by means of meditation), rose into the air to the height of seven palm trees and projected a flame the height of another seven palm trees, so that it blazed and glowed". We would say that he visualized light and fire during his *samādhi* (a frequent phenomenon in *samādhi*) and experienced this so intensely that he projected it as real light into the real world. But in his experience there was no difference between objective and subjective.

The levels of meditation were then real worlds populated by gods, and it was considered possible to become reborn as one of them: "A monk who has achieved virtue, *samādhi* and wisdom may enter the ending of ideation and sensation and emerge therefrom; in that case, if he does not attain knowledge in this life, he will certainly go beyond the community of gods that feed on solid food and arise in a mind-made body" (A III 194). In M III 100-103 many rebirth-possibilities are described. Let me quote the highest of them: "A monk is endowed with faith, virtue, renunciation and wisdom. He hears that the gods that have reached the plane of neither-ideation-nor-non-ideation are long-lived, beautiful, abounding in happiness. He thinks: 'O that at the breaking up of the body after dying I might arise in companionship with the gods that have reached the plane of neither-ideation-nor-non-ideation! He fixes his mind on this, resolves his mind on this, develops his mind for this.

These creative processes, this insistence of his, so developed and emphasized, conduce to uprising there" (*Tassa evam hoti: Aho vatāham kāyassa bhedā parammaranā nevasaññānāsaññāyatanūpagānam devānam sahavyatam uppajjeyyan ti. So tam cittam dahati, tam cittam adhitthāti, tam cittam bhāveti; tassa te sankhārā ca vihāro c'evam bhāvitā bahulīkatā tatr'uppattiyā samvattanti*). In the same way a person may attain the Brahmā-world after death by practising the four divine states (*brahmavihāra*), i.e. by pervading the world in all directions with friendliness, pity, sympathetic joy and equanimity. For instance, D II 250 tells how the brahmin Mahā-Govinda was reborn in the Brahmā-world after this type of exercise.

The texts now referred to show that one reason for practising *samādhi* and *brahmavihāra* was to attain higher states of consciousness, which at the same time meant entering into higher objective worlds. By spending much time in these states/worlds during the present life, rebirth in them could be achieved after death. The texts also prove that the strong wish for a certain rebirth was considered as a real force conducing to the desired rebirth.

## The Variations of Reality

We have seen that a distinction was made between body (*kāya, sarīra, rūpa*) and mind (*citta, viññāna, saññā*), but that the difference between them was rather one of degree than of kind. They are of the same type of reality. But there is a one-dimensional spectrum of variations, we can call it a spectrum of density or solidity.

One of the texts already quoted (D I 195) describes the spectrum: material (*olārika*) which consists of the four elements, mind-made (*manomaya*), and formless (*saññāmaya*, made by ideation). In S V 282 we read that the Buddha had both a material body (*cātumahābhūtika kāya*) and a mind-made body (*manomaya kāya*); with both he was able to reach the Brahmā-world. In A I 24 he says that Cullapanthaka was chief among his disciples in creating a mind-made body.

There are ways of changing the solidity of bodies. For instance, a material body may become less heavy and solid through meditation and by not identifying oneself with it. "Just as an iron ball, if heated all day long, becomes lighter and softer, more plastic and more radiant, just so, whenever the Tathāgata concentrates body in mind and concentrates mind in body (*kāyam pi citte samādahati, cittam pi kāye samādahati*), then, as he enters on and abides in the consciousness of bliss and lightness in the body (*sukhasaññañca lahusaññañca kāye okkamitvā viharati*) ... his body with but little effort rises up from the ground into the air" (S V 283). The idea is probably that the mind (*citta*) is thin and light; by mixing it well with the body the combination will become less heavy. Concentration in itself is a force, and concentration on ligntness is apt to reduce the weight of the body.

In S IV 40 f the story is told of how Upasena died. As soon as he had died, the monks carried him out, and the body was immediately "scattered like a handful of chaff". The reason was that he had "for a long time quelled the disposition to pride that produces the ideas 'I' and 'mine'" (*dīgharattam ahankāra-mamankāra-mānānusayā susamūhatā*). Conscious identification with the body therefore is a force that keeps it solid; Buddhist practices tend to make it lighter and less substantial.

On the other hand, mind-made beings may become more dense, heavy and substantial by eating material food. D III 86 refers to self-luminant beings who "started feasting on the savoury earth ... and in measure as they thus fed, did their bodies become solid" (*tesaṃ sattānaṃ kharattañ c'eva kāyasmiṃ okkami*).

Summing up the evidence, I should like to state that reality according to the early Buddhist interpretation was of only one kind; the variation was built on direct perception. Some perceived things were dense, solid, heavy. Other things were less dense and heavy, for instance water, fire, light, wind. Then there were mental images of things not present, perhaps purely imagined but concrete in all details; they were called mind-made but they were felt to be just as real as the solid things; their characteristics were a certain fluidity, transparency, swift movement. Finally there were the ideations

on the higher levels of *samādhi* which were much more undefined, limitless, formless (*saññāmaya*); but they also were not felt to be less real. All these types of phenomena had after all only a conditional existence, as an empty bubble in the stream of processes.

# CHAPTER 3

# THE DYNAMIC ACT

We have seen that the world according to the early Buddhist view is truly psychophysical: "Within this fathom-long body ..., equipped with *saññā* (ideation) and *mano* (inner sense), I proclaim the world to be, likewise the origin of the world, the destruction of the world and the method leading to the destruction of the world" (A II 48). It is never doubted that the world is objective and real, but our mental images are necessary components of it and just as real in themselves. The things and their corresponding images are perhaps not identical but belong closely together as parts of the same "thing-constituting process". It is no use to ask, whether "reality" is psychological or objective - it is both.

## The Meaning of *Sankhāra*

I have just introduced the concept "thing-constituting process"; the present chapter will be devoted to an explanation of this concept. I will try to show that this is the basic meaning of Pali *sankhāra*.

*Sankhāra* is one of the least understood concepts in Theravāda Buddhism, as can be seen from the great number of translations proposed; some of the most frequent are: activity, habitual tendency, effort, aspiration, accumulation, construction, *kamma*-formation, kammic residue, condition, propensity, factor, thing, component thing, created thing, complex, constituent part, element of existence, trouble. Usually, many meanings are attributed to this word, and a common basic meaning has not been found. We will begin our discussion by distinguishing four meanings.

## Perceived Things

In S III 144 ff the following types of possessions are called *sankhārā*: 84,000 towns, and just as many palaces, halls, couches, elephants, horses, chariots, jewels, women, vassals, cows, 84,000 myriads of garments, and 84,000 vessels. Much the same list is to be found in D II 196 ff. In A IV 100 ff it is stressed how impermanent and unstable are the earth, the mountain Sineru, the streams, rivers, lakes, and the oceans. They are all referred to as *sankhārā*. In S II 190 f, the Buddha describes how the mountain Vepula was once called Pācīnavaṃsa. At that time a people called Tivaras lived in the area, and among them arose a Buddha called Kakusandha. "But see how both the name of this mountain has disappeared, how those people have died and how that master has passed away. So impermanent are *sankhārā*." The well-known statements in Dh 277 and 278, "All *sankhārā* are impermanent", "All *sankhārā* are suffering" (*Sabbe sankhārā aniccā, Sabbe sankhārā dukkhā*) should perhaps be counted in this category. *Sankhārā* is here usually rendered by "things" or "component things"[1]. I think, however, that the meaning is more inclusive, and the reader will, when he has completed the present chapter, understand why I would choose the translation "creations".

## Mental Contents

A different type of *sankhārā* is mentioned in S IV 217, where the Buddha describes what functions cease in the nine levels of *samādhi*: on level 1: speech has ceased, 2: thought and reasoning (*vitakka* and *vicāra*), 3: zest (*pīti*), 4: (consciousness of) inbreathing and outbreathing, 5: form-images (*rūpa-saññā*), 6: perception of the level of infinite space, 7: perception of the level of infinite consciousness, 8: perception of the level of nothingness, 9: ideation and sensation (*saññā, vedanā*) have ceased. All these functions are referred to as *sankhārā*, and the progress to higher levels is always a reduction of functions. In S III 96 ff, a number of views are

enumerated, for instance to regard body as the self (*rūpam attato*), to regard the self as having body, or body as being in the self or the self as being in the body; to regard sensation or perception (*saññā*), or *sankhārā*, or consciousness (*viññāṇa*) as the self, etc., further also the eternalist belief, the annihilationist belief, and even the act of doubting and not being established in the true doctrine. All these views are called *sankhārā*.

## Activities

M I 301 enumerates some *sankhārā* classified into three types: "In-breathing and out-breathing is body-*sankhāra*; thought and reasoning is speech-*sankhāra*; ideation and sensation is mind-*sankhāra* " (*Assāsapassāsā ... kāyasankhāro, vitakkavicārā vacīsankhāro, saññā ca vedanā ca cittasankhāro*).

Breathing is the only type of bodily activities I have been able to find that is called *sankhāra*. It is, however, not permissible to draw the conclusion that only breathing is called *kāyasankhāra*. A I 122 mentions the case that somebody performs a harmful body-*sankhāra* (*savyāpajjhaṃ kāyasankhāraṃ*). It is not probable that breathing would be referred to as harmful. S II 40 describes how personal pleasure and suffering (*ajjhattaṃ sukhadukkhaṃ*) may arise because either oneself or others make bodily *sankhāra*, conditioned by ignorance. This text also cannot refer to breathing. The same seems to be the case in D II 291, where exercises in mindfulness are described. "Let him practise with the thought 'I will breathe in, tranquillizing body-*sankhāra*'". In this exercise, the monk will go on breathing, suppressing bodily movements but not the breathing activity itself. I therefore take it for granted that all types of behaviour and overt activity are included in the body-*sankhārā*.

But behaviour was never very important to the Buddha - that is probably the reason why so little is said about it. He cared only for the force behind it.

Dynamic Processes

In S III 60, *sankhāra* is defined as *sañcetanā*, "will", "intention": "There are these six types of intentions: the will for form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and for mental images. These are called *sankhārā*" (*Chayime ... cetanākāyā: rūpasañcetanā saddasañcetanā gandhasañcetanā rasasañcetanā phoṭṭhabbasañcetanā dhammasañcetanā, ime vuccanti ... sankhārā*). (*Cetanā* is usually translated by "will" or "intention"; in A III 415 it is defined as *kamma*, "action", "work": *cetanāhaṃ ... kammaṃ vadāmi; cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti*, "*cetanā* I call work; having intended one performs work"). According to this analysis *sankhāra* is an intentional act belonging to one of the six sense-modalities. This meaning fits the following context very well: "Then whatever inclination the general Sīha had to go and see the Master subsided" (*Atha kho Sīhassa senāpatissa, yo ahosi gamiyābhisankhāro Bhagavantaṃ dassanāya, so paṭippassambhi*, A IV 180). In M III 73, "right purpose" (*sammāsankappa*) is defined as a certain type of *takko vitakko ... vācāsankhāro*, "argument, thought ... and speech-*sankhāra*"; the meaning of *sankhāra* must in this case be "purposeful activity". A creative aspect seems to be essential in the following passage: "While I am trying to suppress the (*sankhāra*, i.e.) creation of this source of suffering, I reach detachment through trying to suppress the creation" (*Imassa kho me dukkhanidānassa sankhāraṃ padahato sankhārappadhānā virāgo hoti*, M II 223). The human individual consists of and is constituted by an enormous amount of psychological, creative processes. *Sankhāra* as one of the personality factors (*khandha*) is therefore always found in the plural form. "What is only a mass of *sankhārā*, there no 'being' is found" (*Suddhasankhārapuñjo yaṃ, nayidha sattūpalabbhati*, S I 135). "Form is impermanent, sensation, ideation, the activities, consciousness are impermanent; form etc., are impersonal; all *sankhārā* are impermanent; all *dhammā* (representations, mental processes, phenomena) are impersonal" (*Rūpaṃ ... aniccaṃ, vedanā aniccā, saññā aniccā, sankhārā aniccā, viññāṇaṃ aniccaṃ; rūpaṃ ... anattā*, etc.; *sabbe sankhārā aniccā, sabbe dhammā anattā*, M I 228).

As a process *sankhāra* is caused, and is of short duration. In S III 96 it is stressed: "that *sankhāra* (i.e. to regard body as the self) is impermanent, created, conditioned" (*so pi kho sankhāro anicco sankhato paṭiccasamuppanno*). In S II 266 the impermanence of *āyusankhāra* (life-process, to be discussed later) is stressed: Suppose there were four skilful archers, standing one in each direction, and a man came, promising to catch and bring back all the shafts as quickly as the four archers were able to shoot them! That man would really need to be swift! But "still swifter is the passing away of the life-processes" (*tato sīghataraṃ āyusankhārā khīyanti*). *Sankhāra* is conditioned by ignorance, according to the standard version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series (e.g. M I 67), but there are other versions as well. S III 96, mentioned above, gives the following series: "In the untaught lay people stimulated by sensation that is born of the impact of ignorance, craving arises; from that is born this *sankhāra*" (*Avijjāsamphassajena ... vedayitena phuṭṭhassa assutavato puthujjanassa uppannā taṇhā: tatojo so sankhāro*). In S III 60, *sankhārā* are said to arise from *phassa*, "contact", just as two more of the personality factors, namely *vedanā* and *saññā*. Still another version is found in S II 101: "Where there is descent of name and form, there is growth of *sankhārā*" (*Yattha atthi nāmarūpassa avakkanti atthi tattha sankhārānaṃ vuddhi*). From these contexts the dynamic and psychological process-character of *sankhāra* becomes quite clear.

The impression that the central meaning of *sankhāra* is dynamic is confirmed by its use as signifying magical power. In such cases, the strengthened form *abhi-sankhāra*, "super-*sankhāra*", and the corresponding verb *abhisankharoti* are usually preferred. "Thereupon the venerable Mahaka made a magical (*iddhi*) creation (*abhisankhāra*) such that a cool wind blew and there was a thunderstorm and the sky(-god) rained down drop by drop" (*Atha kho āyasmā Mahako tathārūpaṃ iddhābhisankhāraṃ abhisankhari, yathā sītako ca vāto vāyi abbhasaṃvilāpo ca assa devo ca ekam ekam phusi*, S IV 289 f). "Performing magic, the fraud pronounced his spell" (*Abhisankharitvā kuhako bheravaṃ so akittayi*, SN 984). *Abhisankhāra* can be seen as a stronger form of *sankhāra*, but the types of processes referred to may

not be very different. Perhaps all *sankhārā* were felt to have a touch of magic at that time. Magic could be performed by means of concentrated willpower (cf. the recurring expression *chandasamādhipadhānasankhārasamannāgatam iddhipādam*, "the method of magic based on creation, application and concentration of wishing", e.g. S V 254), but something of the same creative intention was contained in all *sankhārā*.

## *Sankhāra* and *Kamma*

The word *kamma* usually refers to acts that are performed from good or bad motives and which are one of the factors influencing the next birth. The moral aspect is usually considered important when the word *kamma* is used. *Kamma* is closely connected with *sankhāra* as we see in M I 389: "What ... is the deed that is dark ...? Here someone makes a body-*sankhāra* which is harmful ..." (*Katamaṃ ... kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ ...? Idha ... ekacco sabyābajjhaṃ kāyasankhāraṃ abhisankharoti* ...). The same close affinity between the two words is also expressed in D III 217: "Three (types of) *sankhāra*: good (meritorious), bad and neutral activity" (*Tayo sankhārā: puññābhisankhāro, apuññābhisankhāro āneñjābhisankhāro*). The ethical aspect is then important also for *sankhāra*. From the following passage we see that *sankhāra* is a central concept in the Buddhist explanation of suffering: "In a man of false view all bodily actions done according to that view, all actions of speech, ... of the inner sense, ... all intentions, aspirations and decisions, all *sankhārā* - all such things conduce to the unpleasant, the distasteful, the repulsive, the unprofitable, in short, to suffering" (*Micchādiṭṭhikassa ... purisapuggalassa yañ c'eva kāyakammaṃ yathādiṭṭhisamattaṃ sammādinnaṃ yañ ca vacīkammaṃ ... pe ... yañ ca manokammaṃ yathādiṭṭhisamattaṃ samādinnaṃ yā ca cetanā ... yā ca patthanā yo ca paṇidhi ye ca sankhārā sabbe te dhammā aniṭṭhāya akantāya amanāpāya ahitāya dukkhāya saṃvattanti*, A I 32). Here *sankhārā* is formally coordinated to the other nouns, *kamma*, intensions etc., but it is probably meant as a more general and inclusive summary of them, and a proper translation

would probably be "all intentional or creative processes". The continuation of the passage explains by means of a simile how wrong views will lead to suffering: it is like planting a seed of bitter-pumpkin; wherever you plant it, the fruit will be bitter, because the seed is such by nature that whatever nourishment it extracts from the soil and water will conduce to its bitterness. In the same way, false views will lead to bad intentional acts (i.e. *kamma* and *sankhāra*), and they will produce suffering.

One aspect of this suffering is unfortunate rebirth. In this process, "*kamma* is the field, consciousness the seed and craving the moisture" (*kammaṃ khettaṃ viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ taṇhā sineho*, A I 223). Since *kamma* can be considered as one type of *sankhāra*, the latter concept is important for the understanding of the rebirth process. "Recluses or brahmins who do not understand 'This is suffering' etc. ... they delight in *sankhārā* that lead to birth. ... Because they perform such *sankhārā* that lead to birth ... they fall down the precipice of birth" (*Ye hi keci ... samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā Idaṃ dukkhan ti yathābhūtaṃ nappajānanti ... te jātisaṃvattanikesu sankhāresu abhiramanti ... Te jātisaṃvattanike pi sankhāre abhisankharitvā ... jātipapātam pi papatanti*, S V 449). But, as the text goes on, those who understand will not delight in *sankhārā* and not perform such *sankhārā*, and they are released from birth. Here, *sankhārā* evidently means nearly the same as *kamma*, i.e. a volitional act of moral significance.

Important is also the wish, the aspiration, to obtain rebirth in a certain environment. For instance "It occurs to him: 'O that at the breaking up of the body after dying I might arise in companionship with rich nobles. He fixes his mind on this, he resolves his mind on this, he develops his mind for this. These *sankhārā* (creative processes), this insistence of his, developed thus, emphasized thus, conduce to uprising there". (*Tassa evam hoti: Aho vatāhaṃ kāyassa bhedā parammaraṇā khattiyamahāsālānaṃ sahavyataṃ uppajjeyyan ti. So taṃ cittaṃ dahati, taṃ cittaṃ adhiṭṭhāti, taṃ cittaṃ bhāveti; tassa te sankhārā ca vihāro c'evaṃ bhāvitā bahulīkatā tatr'uppattiyā saṃvattanti*, M III 99 f). This intense wish, this concentration

on a certain rebirth is thus called *sankhāra*. This is an important aspect of the word: the intense creative force we experience within when needing or wishing something. It is felt to be a creative act enforcing its own fulfilment. This aspect makes *sankhāra* one of the most central concepts of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series (further specified by *taṇhā* and *upādāna*): *sabbe sattā sankhāraṭṭhitikā* (D III 211), "all beings are constituted through *sankhāra*."

## Conclusion: The Creative Moment

It seems to me that there is no contradiction between all these uses of the word, only a stress on different aspects of the same basic meaning. I think the clue is offered partly by a passage in A II 48, which was quoted in the beginning of this chapter, partly by the following text: "Why do you say '*sankhārā*'? Because they create what is created; therefore they are called *sankhārā*. And what is the creation they create? They create form by form-process, sensation by sensation-process, images by ideation-process, *sankhārā* by *sankhāra*-process, consciousness by consciousness-process. They create what is created - therefore they are called *sankhārā*" (*Kiñca ... sankhāre vadetha? Sankhataṃ abhisankharontīti ..., tasmā sankhārā ti vuccanti. Kiñca sankhatam abhisankharonti? Rūpam rūpattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti, vedanaṃ vedanattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti, saññaṃ saññattāya sankhataṃ abhisankharonti, sankhāre sankhārattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti , viññāṇaṃ viññāṇattāya sankhatam abhisankharonti. Sankhatam abhisankharontīti ..., tasmā sankhārā ti vuccanti*, S III 87). My translation deviates a little from Woodward's; he writes: "Because they compose a compound", so I have to explain my choice of "create". Etymologically, *sankhāra* is a combination of two elements, *sam*, "together", and *karoti*, "make". It is therefore theoretically possible to stress the one or the other element more, and so we get either 'compound' or 'creation'. But I have quoted M I 389 and D III 217 above showing tnat *sankhāra* belongs to the field of action. And the examples of *sankhārā* quoted from M I 301 are all activities or

processes. The connections with rebirth and the classification of *saṅkhārā* as good, bad and neutral point in the same direction. The definition of *saṅkhāra* as *sañcetanā*, "volitional act", in S III 60 shows that it refers to a dynamic process or act. And to quote still another text: *saṅkhārānaṃ khayaṃ ñatvā akataññū si* (Dh 383), "knowing the destruction of *saṅkhārā* you know the un-created".

To return to the quoted text S III 87, I think it describes how the human personality is constituted and continually recreated through dynamic processes: the body by form-processes (cf. a passage from S III 86 quoted in the last chapter), sensation by sensation-processes, the perceptual and ideational world through perceptual processes, activity through intentional acts, and consciousness through conscious acts. Personality is therefore a composite of five types of creative moments, rapidly changing (but by no means uncoordinated or unintegrated): "What is only a mass of (creative) processes, there no 'being' is found" (S I 135, quoted above). The same explanation should be valid for M I 228, also quoted earlier: "all creations are impermanent".

Through the *saññā*-factor, mentioned in S III 87, the whole perceptual world is created and projected. It is therefore not surprising to find that the earth, mountains, rivers, palaces, jewels, horses and garments (S III 144 ff, A IV 100 ff, referred to above) are called *saṅkhārā*. They are produced through acts of *saññā*. It should be noted that even external behaviour (*kāya-saṅkhāra*) is known only through consciousness and ultimately is of the same nature as all other types of *saṅkhāra*. The classification of *saṅkhārā* according to sense-modalities in S III 60, already quoted, probably refers to this creative construction of the perceptual world.

Just as the external objects are built up through dynamic acts, so is of course the inner world, with thoughts, theories and ego-illusion. M I 301 calls thought a speech-*saṅkhāra* since theoretical thought is usually formulated in words and even vocally, during discussions. According to M I 120, one way to get rid of evil unskilled thoughts is to observe "the halting of thought-creation" (*vitakka-saṅkhāra-saṇṭhānaṃ*), from which

it follows that thought is a *sankhāra*.

Since there is a basic similarity in the meaning of *sankhāra* in all the contexts quoted, I think it would be appropriate to use very similar translations. All translations should stress the creative process-nature of the word. When external things are called *sankhāra*, we could use the English equivalent "creation", in order to indicate that they are not altogether independent of us and that they would be of no interest to us if we were not personally involved in their appearance, and also in order to stress their impermanence. When psychological phenomena are referred to, e.g. perceptions, mental images (as in S IV 217) and views (S III 96 ff), we could call them "(creative) processes", and human actions could be called "activities" or "actions". I do not seem to find any context which forces us to translate by "accumulation" or "propensity" and also not "*kamma*-formation"[2], which are frequently found in translations. It is true that in the kammic process, a kind of "accumulation", "kammic memory" or "kammic modification" must take place. But we shall find in this book that this process takes place in *viññāṇa*, "consciousness", and is called *upādāna* (these words will be analysed in the next two chapters). All personal *sankhārā* are connected with *upādāna*: "activities connected with influxes and *upādāna* are called 'the building material (i.e. the personality factor) of activities'" (*Ye keci sankhārā ... sāsavā upādānīyā ayaṃ vuccati sankhārupādānakkhandho*, S III 47).

Since *sankhārakkhandha* is conditioned by *phassa*, "contact", and defined in terms of *cetanā*, "intention" (S III 60), we can probably call it the factor of mental creativity or volitional activities. The meaning of S III 87, discussed above, is probably to stress the process-nature of all the *khandhā*, and the plural *sankhārā* should be rendered "creative processes".

Common to *sankhāra* as part of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series in its most common form and *sankhārakkhandha* is that *sankhārā* in both cases are said to be a condition of *viññāṇa*, "consciousness". This confirms our interpretation of *sankhāra* as mental creativity: it builds up the inner world, which is also the creation of the next life. In order to understand this, one has

however, to take the whole series into consideration. *Sankhāra* as one of the twelve *nidānā* should, therefore, be rendered "creativity", "creative processes".

If the world is constituted through *sankhāra*, it is quite appropriate to say, as we quoted from S II 17, that it neither exists nor does not exist. The statement of the Buddha, that it is "conditionally arisen" (*paṭiccasamuppanna*) is quite meaningful. It would mean that the world is continually being constituted through dynamic processes: it *consists* of processes, but processes do not *exist;* they are an interplay of forces without a material, rigid, *existing* substratum. These elementary dynamic processes are the *sankhārā*. Are they material? This question is not relevant. We know them only as conscious processes. We can study them through introspection. To the Buddha these processes were real - only we have learnt in our schools that they are just falsified images of something material, real and stable. We know the world from books, we have not seen it since we were small children. But looking inside, disregarding our biasses, we experience the processes and feel the creative forces; we feel that we can influence and create. We can, as the Buddha said, create by means of our mind, our voice and our body. Many of our creations are independent of us and cannot be influenced (but the reason of this may be ignorance and lack of the proper technique). Many of our creations are imperfect, even morally bad. By our creative activity, we continually build and rebuild ourselves: good actions improve our future chances, bad actions change us in a bad direction, for this life as for a future life.

## How to Influence the *Sankhārā*

One of the goals of Buddhism was to reduce, even eradicate *sankhāra*. What does that mean? The Buddhist disciple should understand the nature of the creative process (S V 449, quoted above): ignorance is the first input-channel to *sankhāra*, by means of which it can be influenced ("conditioned by ignorance, activities will arise"). Another input-channel is contact

("*sankhāra* arises conditioned by contact"). *Sankhārā* can therefore be reduced through a reduction of the contacts usually leading to perception. By closing the eyes, there will be no "eye-contact", and we will see nothing. The main purpose of the exercises in *samādhi* was probably to reduce *sankhāra* by this method. This becomes evident from a passage in S IV 217 where all the levels of *samādhi* are described and the types of *sankhārā* that are eliminated on each level are mentioned. In the first *jhāna*, for instance, the *sankhārā* of speech will cease, on the fourth the *sankhārā* of body, and on the level of "the cessation of ideation and sensation" (*saññāvedayitanirodha*), the two *sankhārā* of the mind, ideation and sensation, will cease. Nearly all *sankhārā* are then eliminated, but a few will remain until nibbāna is attained: desire, hatred and illusion (*rāga, dosa, moha*), and probably the influxes (*āsavā*), although they are not mentioned here. A more limited meaning of *sankhārā* seems, on the other hand, to be implied in M II 231, where it is said that the two highest levels of *samādhi* can be reached only when no *sankhārā* remain; these would then be quite empty of *sankhārā*. These texts about the reduction of *sankhārā* during the *samādhi*-exercises are quite illuminating with regard to the nature of *sankhārā*: they confirm that these basically consist in bodily and mental activity of all types. The third input-channel to *sankhārā* is craving (*taṇhā*, see S III 96, quoted above). By eliminating craving, *sankhārā* may be eliminated. This can be done in a number of ways, the most important of which is *sati*, "mindfulness". "Māra does not gain access to ... anyone in whom mindfulness of body has been developed" (M III 95). "They (women) fetter him who has forgotten mindfulness, with gaze and smile" (A III 69). The function of *sati* should be to keep the inflowing sensations pure of desire, interest, and involvement: without these, *sankhārā* would be greatly reduced. In the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series, mindfulness can be said to put up a barrier between sensation and craving.

Nibbāna is a state free from *sankhāra*: it is called "unmade, un-created" (*akataṃ asankhataṃ*, U 80), which probably means that it is not a *sankhāra* and not produced through *sankhāra*. It is also a state without further creations. A man

free from ignorance makes no *sankhārā*, either good, bad or neutral (*so avijjāvirāgā vijjuppādān-eva puññābhisankhāram abhisankharoti, na apuññābhisankhāram abhisankharoti, na ānejābhisankhāram abhisankharoti*, S II 82). The exact meaning of this is, however, not clear. The arahant is supposed to keep his personality factors (*khandhā*, of which *sankhārā* is one) until he dies. "The five factors are well understood; they are still standing, although their roots are cut off" (*Pañcakkhandhā pariññātā titthanti chinnamūlakā*, Ta 90). Only when he dies, "the activities are calmed" (*vūpasamimsu sankhārā*, U 93). So at least certain types of *sankhārā* are kept as long as the arahant is alive. Only desire, hate, illusion and the influxes, and all types of *sankhārā* with kammic consequences are definitely eradicated. Others disappear only temporally, in *samādhi*. The Buddha is said to have kept his "life-creation" (*āyu-sankhāra*) until three months before his death (more about this will be said later).

What happens when the creative activities definitely cease and the arahant dies? The Buddha refused to commit himself clearly, but we must again remember that his world was a perceptual world. We would say that when an interplay of forces without a material substratum ceases, then nothing would remain. The human personality would then be annihilated in death. But again, the Buddha's world was different: he was familiar with the processes of consciousness, and he knew from meditation that consciousness need not cease when all conscious processes cease. On the contrary, this was to him the ideal state: a quite calm, unmoving consciousness, completely empty of conscious processes, quite impersonal, quite unlimited. To attain this was a way to conquer impermanence and manifoldness; he would sense it to be permanent, the only permanent state he knew - and why should it not be? He was used to trusting his perceptions, so why should not this perception be true? We will return to this problem later, when discussing the nature of *citta*, "the mind".

Some Special Problems

A II 155 distinguishes four types of persons attaining freedom:

(a) *diṭṭh'eva dhamme sasankhāraparinibbāyī*
(b) *kāyassa bhedā sasankhāraparinibbāyī*
(c) *diṭṭh'eva dhamme asankhāraparinibbāyī*
(d) *kāyassa bhedā asankhāraparinibbāyī*.

The PTS translation renders *sasankhāra* by "with some effort" and *asankhāra* by "without effort". This translation may seem reasonable even from our point of view, but the context invites a different interpretation. Type (a) and (b) are said to attain freedom by contemplating the ugliness of the body and the repulsiveness of food etc., but type (c) and (d) by training *samādhi* (only the first four levels are mentioned). Now, the function of *samādhi* is to eliminate *sankhārā*; so naturally it leads to a state of nibbāna "without *sankhārā*". The first-mentioned method, on the other hand, works through the medium of *saññā*, which is a type of *sankhāra*. So the result will be nibbāna "with *sankhāra*". Therefore I would propose the translation "with activity remaining" and "with no activity remaining". (The difference between *diṭṭh'eva dhamme* "in this life", and *kāyassa bhedā*, "after the dissolution of the body", depends on the degree of development of the powers of faith, modesty, self-restraint, energy and understanding, and is irrelevant for our discussion here.)

The expression *āyu-sankhāra* was mentioned above. We will now briefly discuss this and related expressions. "The Master warded off that illness by will-power, and kept insisting on his life-creating force" (*Bhagavā taṃ ābādhaṃ viriyena paṭippaṇāmetvā jīvita-sankhāraṃ adhiṭṭhāya vihāsi*, D II 99). This shows what importance was attributed to *sankhāra* as creative force: by sheer will-force it is possible to live on. The *jīvita-sankhāra* is probably the same as *āyu-sankhāra* and *bhava-sankhāra* as they occur, for instance, in D II 106; "Thus the Master, while at the Shrine of Cāpāla, mindful and composed, rejected his *āyu-sankhāra*" (*Atha kho Bhagavā Cāpāle cetiye sato sampajāno āyu-sankhāraṃ ossaji*). And further D II 107:

*Tulam atulañ ca sambhavam*
*bhava-saṅkhāram avassaji munī;*
*Ajjhattarato samāhito abhida*
*kavacam iv'atta-sambhavam.*

The proper translation of this is doubtful. T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids have rendered it thus,

"His sum of life the sage renounced,
The cause of life immeasurable or small;
With inward joy and calm, he broke,
Like coat of mail, his life's own cause".

This happened three months before the *parinibbāna* of the Buddha. During this time he seems to have lived a normal life, walking from place to place, teaching and taking his meals, just as usual. The texts, therefore, cannot refer to any type of illness; quite clearly a deliberate act of will is intended.

Before going further with this discussion, let us glean what little additional information we can find. M I 296 offers this information: "These *āyusankhārā* are not themselves states to be felt. If these *āyusankhārā* were states to be felt, no emergence could be shown for a monk who had attained the stopping of ideation and sensation" (*Na ... te va āyusankhārā te vedaniyā dhammā. Te ... āyusankhārā abhaviṃsu te vedaniyā dhammā, na-y-idaṃ saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpannassa bhikkhuno vuṭṭhānaṃ paññāyetha*). Here we learn that there are *sankhārā* on each level. Normally, *sankhārā* of body, speech and mind go on; but in the highest level of *samādhi* they have all ceased, at least in one who has attained nibbāna. The difference between this level and death is that in *samādhi*, *āyu*, "vitality", is not destroyed, *usmā*, "heat", is not allayed and *indriyāni*, "the sense-fields", have been purified. The text shows that "vitality" also functions in the form of *sankhāra*, although it is not conscious and is therefore left untouched by the disappearing of *saññā* and *vedanā*. *Āyusankhāra* would therefore refer to a subconscious or physiological process. From S II 266 we learn that *āyusankhārā* pass away swifter than a hypothetical man who is able to catch all shafts let fly by four expert archers shooting in different directions. So, *āyusankhāra* must be visualised as a rapid succession of processes. A V 88 men-

tions ten conditions of the body: cold, heat, hunger, thirst, evacuation, urination, control of body, control of speech, control of livelihood, and *ponobhaviko bhavasankhāro*, "growth-process in connection with again-becoming". The last link therefore probably refers to some physiological preparation for the next life.

The text quoted from D II 107 offers some interesting co-ordinated concepts or attributes: *atta-sambhava*, "personality-production", and *tulam atulañ ca sambhavam*, "limited and unlimited creation", probably referring to the present life-span and the endless *saṃsāra*.

Adding up all this evidence, we arrive at the probable meaning "life-creating force" or "life-intention". What the Buddha renounced was, therefore, the continued creating life force. He made the decision to break off the renewing process both for this life and for all future. We therefore get a translation like this: "The sage renounced his life-creating force, both the limited and the endless creation; with inward joy and calm he broke the personality-production like a shell".

# CHAPTER 4

# CONSCIOUSNESS

Most commonly *viññāṇa* is translated by "consciousness", and we shall keep this translation. *Viññāṇa* is the third link in the most common version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series and is said to be conditioned by *saṅkhārā*, "activities", and is itself the condition of *nāmarūpa*, "name and form". *Viññāṇa* is also one of the five *khandhā*, or personality factors. It has a rich and varied meaning which we shall try to define in this chapter.

## Connecting Link

*Viññāṇa* is the active agent in the process of rebirth. It "descends into the mother's womb" (D II 63). In A I 223 it is said to be like a seed which will grow if it is planted into the field of action (*kamma*) and is watered by craving (*taṇhā*). This is given as an explanation of *bhava*, "becoming". The same idea is expressed in a different type of context, exemplified in S II 11-13, where *viññāṇa* is mentioned as the fourth type of *āhāra* (nourishment), after *kabaliṅkāra āhāra*, *phassa*, *manosañcetanā* (material food, contact, volition). This nourishment is said to be based on *taṇhā* (craving) and lead to *punabbhava* (again-becoming). This probably means that food is of no use if there is no hunger; because there is hunger for life, *viññāṇa* can function as a stepping-stone to new life. M II 262 - 264 describes what might happen if a monk can reach and dwell in different levels of *samādhi*. He may, for instance, either reach tranquillity (*āneñja*) now or aspire to understanding (*paññā*). "At the breaking up of the body after dying this situation exists, that that evolving consciousness may accordingly reach tranquillity" (*Kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā ṭhānaṃ etaṃ vijjati yaṃ taṃ saṃvattanikaṃ viññāṇaṃ assa āneñjūpagaṃ*). Or, if a higher level of *samādhi* has been developed, the evolving consciousness may reach the plane of neither-ideation-nor-non-

ideation after death (*saṃvattanikaṃ viññāṇaṃ assa nevasaññānā-saññāyatanūpagaṃ*).

These quotations prove that rebirth is effected through *viññāṇa*. We should, however, not draw the conclusion that *viññāṇa* will survive death and arise as a new individual, since this interpretation is explicitly denied in M I 256. However, S I 122 presupposes at least a short survival: Māra is looking for the *viññāṇa* of Godhika who has just died, but cannot find it, because Godhika is *parinibbuto* (completely free) with an "unestablished consciousness". So in rebirth, consciousness is perhaps conceived in analogy with the growing of a seed. It is planted and it grows. It has all the potentialities and dispositions of a new plant within itself (equivalent to the *kamma* of the human individual). When it grows, the dispositions are developed, but the seed itself is left aside, dies and dissolves; so *viññāṇa* dies and dissolves, when the new individual is formed through the transmitted *kamma*.

Our quotations also prove that *viññāṇa* is something very personal, since rebirth is a personal process. Some monks were able to recall thousands of previous lives, but the succession is always described as a strictly personal time-line; there is never a mixture of personalities. In this sense it is appropriate to call *viññāṇa* a personal unit.

## Inner Space

If you close your eyes and try to remember your home, for instance, you will create an inner space of consciousness, in which you will see different and changing images of your home and the members of the family moving about, and you will hear the characteristic sounds and sense the characteristic smells, etc. Everything that you want to recollect clearly, will appear in this inner space. If you want to, you may also be able to empty the room and see an empty space.

An inner space of this type is *viññāṇa*. See, for instance M III 31 where six elements (*dhātu*) are enumerated: earth, water, light, air, space (*ākāsa*) and *viññāṇa*. The succession

should be noted: the series starts with "gross" and dense matter and progresses towards thinner and more transparent matter. It follows that *viññāṇa* was felt to be a still more subtle space than *ākāsa* and corresponding to an inner, conscious space. Or you could call it a dimension, the dimension of consciousness. This conclusion seems to be confirmed by texts describing the different levels of *samādhi*, e.g. D I 183: on the fifth level the meditating monk passes beyond all form images, all sense of plurality, and concentrates on the visualization of the infinite space (*ananta ākāsa*), and on the sixth level he tries to expand the inner space of *viññāṇa* to infinity and realize the idea of infinite consciousness (*ananta viññāṇa*). I take these levels to be stages in the attempt to empty the mind. By visualizing the external space as empty and homogeneous, all differentiations may be transcended. By directing the attention inwards to the inner space, a higher level of emptiness and boundlessness may be reached.

This inner space is mainly visual but in reality six-dimensional, since all the senses are represented: "consciousness of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body (touch), the inner sense" (*cakkhuviññāṇaṃ sotaviññāṇaṃ ghānaviññāṇaṃ jivhāviññāṇaṃ kāyaviññāṇaṃ manoviññāṇaṃ*, S II 4).

## Conscious Processes

The room has usually a content, conscious or unconscious, and much of this is frequently called *viññāṇa*. These contents seem to be classified in S III 68 as past, future, or present; internal and external (i.e. presumably internally produced representations and perceptions of external things, respectively); low and high; far or near; gross or subtle (*oḷārika, sukhuma*, i.e. probably concrete images and abstract, empty states, respectively). The same classification is, however, given to the other four factors, so it possibly refers to different types of existence in *saṃsāra*. Usually the contents and processes of consciousness are given other names: *saññā* (ideations), *vedanā* (sensations and feelings), *dhammā* (mental processes) etc. Cf.

M I 293: "Sensation, ideation and consciousness - these states are associated, not dissociated, and it is not possible to lay down a difference between these states, having analysed them again and again" (*Yā ca ... vedanā yā ca saññā yañ ca viññāṇaṃ ime dhammā saṃsaṭṭhā udāhu visaṃsaṭṭhā, labbhā ca pan'imesaṃ dhammānaṃ vinibbhujitvā vinibbhujitvā nānākaraṇaṃ paññāpetum.*) As the matter is further explained: "For whatever one senses, that one gets an image of; whatever one has an image of, that one discriminates (is conscious of)" (*Yaṃ hi ... vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vijānāti*). In other words, they are all different stages of a conscious process. In S III 87, the word *viññāṇa* is derived from *vijānāti*, literally "discriminate": "One discriminates sour and bitter, acrid and sweet, alkaline and non-alkaline; salty and not salty; therefore the word *viññāṇa* is used".

Personal Centre

Every person has his own *viññāṇa*. This follows from S IV 195 where *viññāṇa* is said to be a name for "the lord of the town", although this function would perhaps more typically be attributed to *citta*, "the mind". In S II 100, *viññāṇa* is said to be like a man hit by 300 spears but still alive and suffering intense pain. In the same way, *viññāṇa*, when awake, is bombarded by sense-impressions and is aware of them. But suppose that the sense-organs were destroyed (S IV 168), then there would be no grasping of the marks or details of objects cognizable by the eye (*cakkhuviññeyyesu rūpesu*) and perhaps *viññāṇa* would not be established.[1]

*Viññāṇa* may be fettered by ambition and desire (*chandarāgapaṭibaddhaṃ*), if one thinks: 'Such was my vision in the distant past, such were the forms' (M III 196). "If a monk has seen a form with the eye and his *viññāna* runs after the signs of the form and is tied, bound and fettered by satisfaction in the signs of the form, then his *viññāna* is said to be distracted and diffused by external things" (M III 225). *Viññāna* is, therefore, strongly influenced by feelings and dynamic proc-

esses. This is sometimes expressed so that *viññāṇa* is said to depend on the other personality factors: "The element of form ... is the home of consciousness. Consciousness being tied to form by means of desire is called 'home-haunter'" (*Rūpadhātu ... viññāṇassa oko; rūpadhāturāgavinibaddhañca pana viññāṇam okasārīti vuccati*). The same is repeated for *vedanā, saññā, sankhārā* and *viññāṇa* (S III 9). D III 228 mentions four stations or establishments of *viññāṇa*: "When consciousness is established, it is either in connection with form or with sensation, or ideation, or activities. In connection with any of these as an instrument, as an object of thought, as a platform, as a seat of enjoyment, it attains growth, increase, abundance" (*Rūpūpāyaṃ vā ... viññāṇaṃ tiṭṭhamānaṃ tiṭṭhati, rūpārammaṇaṃ rūpappatiṭṭhaṃ nandūpavesanaṃ vuḍḍhiṃ virūḷhiṃ vepullaṃ āpajjati*, repeated for *vedanā, saññā, sankhārā*). This seems to mean that *viññāṇa* is developed by desiring, leaning on and collecting images, sensations and activities. In this way a new birth is prepared and effected.

This collecting and developing aspect is frequently stressed in different words. See, for instance S II 82: "If an ignorant man performs an act of merit, consciousness goes to merit" (*Avijjāgato yaṃ ... purisapuggalo puññaṃ ce sankhāram abhisankharoti, puññūpagaṃ hoti viññāṇam*). That is to say that *viññāṇa* is the collector of *kamma* effects. We shall see in the next chapter that the collecting function is called *upādāna*. But "without that foundation (i.e. desire for the personality factors) consciousness has no growth, and without creativeness it is free" (*Tad apatiṭṭhitaṃ viññāṇam avirūḷham anabhisankhārañca vimuttam*, S III 53). *Viññāṇa* is also the centre for the memory of former lives: "Concerning the past, the Tathāgata has a consciousness reminiscent of existences" (*Atītaṃ kho ... addhānaṃ ārabbha Tathāgatassa satānusāri-viññāṇaṃ hoti*, D III 134). Since both the kammic effects and the memories from former lives are usually not conscious, we are forced to assume subconscious storerooms for these memories. That *viññāṇa* can be influenced by unconscious tendencies is shown by the use of *anuseti* in the following context: "Even if he does not will or intend, but there still is a disposition - this becomes a basis for an

establishment of consciousness" (*No ce ... ceteti no ce pakappeti atha ce anuseti, ārammaṇam etaṃ hoti viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā*, S II 65).

## Purification of Consciousness

Since *viññāṇa* plays a central part in the theory of rebirth, it is easy to understand that the Buddhist training programme was much concerned with it. "A monk should so investigate that, as he investigates, his consciousness of what is external be undistracted, not diffused, and of what is internal be unestablished so that it may not be disturbed by grasping" (*Tathā tathā ... bhikkhu upaparikkheyya yathā yathā'ssa upaparikkhato bahiddhā c'assa viññāṇaṃ avikkhittaṃ avisaṭaṃ ajjhattaṃ asaṇṭhitaṃ anupādāya na paritasseyya*, M III 223). *Viññāṇa* should then not be distracted by external influences and not wish for and build a certain type of future life. "Whatever impermanence, suffering, liability to change are in consciousness, this constitutes the peril in consciousness. Whatever the control of ambition and desire for consciousness, the getting rid of the ambition and desire, this constitutes the refuge in consciousness" (*Yaṃ viññāṇaṃ aniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, ayaṃ viññāṇe ādīnavo. Yo viññāṇe chandarāgavinayo chandarāgapahānaṃ, idaṃ viññāṇe nissaraṇaṃ*, M III 18). This text concerns the *khandhā*: These should not be valued, collected and used as a basis for future growth. The proper method is to make *viññāṇa* (or *citta*) calm, immovable, empty, free from interest in anything external. A IV 426 f describes an "escape from the noose": "There will be just the eye, but no sensing of forms and the visual modality", etc. for the other senses (*tad eva nāma cakkhuṃ bhavissati, te rūpā tañ cāyatanaṃ no paṭisaṃvedissati*). SN 734, 735 seems to prefer a more radical expression: "If *viññāṇa* is destroyed, there will be no origin of suffering; through the calming of *viññāṇa* the monk becomes free from craving and completely free" (*viññāṇassa nirodhena n'atthi dukkhassa sambhavo, ... viññāṇūpasamā bhikkhu nicchāto parinibbuto*). What is to be destroyed is, however, only the activities and the entanglements of *viññāṇa*, not *viññāṇa*

itself, therefore "destruction" and "calming" can be used as synonyms.

One way of developing *viññāṇa* is the development of *samādhi*, and in M I 293, three levels of *samādhi* are said to be attained "by purified mental consciousness isolated from the five sense-organs" (*Nissaṭṭhena ... pañcahi indriyehi parisuddhena manoviññāṇena*): the plane of infinite space, the plane of infinite consciousness, and the plane of no-thing. This is actually a method of emptying, expanding and neutralizing *viññāṇa*. On the highest level, *saññāvedayitanirodha*, the meditator is free from ideations and sensations and therefore probably from all manifestations or contents of *viññāṇa*.

When the monk has emerged from *samādhi* and has seen that the influxes flow no longer, he has still his personality factors: these are dispersed only when the arahant dies. But there is no more accumulation and "earth, water, fire and wind gain no foothold; here long and short, fine and coarse, pure and impure, here name and form cease without trace" (*Ettha āpo ca paṭhavī tejo vāyo na gādhati; ettha dīghañ ca rassañ ca aṇuṁ thūlaṁ subhāsubhaṁ, ettha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesaṁ uparujjhati*, D I 223). In this way, consciousness becomes purified. The number of concrete processes is reduced to a minimum. There is unity, not differentiation, emptiness, not encumbrance, detachment, not dependence. It becomes "free from attributes, endless and radiating all round" (*Viññāṇaṁ anidassanaṁ anantaṁ sabbatopabhaṁ*, M I 329).

## Conclusion

*Viññāṇa* refers mainly to the stream of conscious processes which characterizes the human mind, but it is also a word for the personal centre or agent which is responsible for the continuity both within this life and beyond. This centre can also be described as an inner space which can be filled with images but also be emptied. One sometimes gets an impression that it can be described as a very thin substance but it is probably more adequate to call it the dimension of consciousness. It is by nature

dynamic and continually changing. The changes can go in opposite directions. It may become more and more dependent on the stimuli from the external world and may be stuffed with contents and memories, which transform *viññāṇa* to the new personality of the next birth. On the other hand it may become more independent, more pure: through clarity it will further understanding (*paññā*), and by becoming empty and calm it will offer no basis for further rebirth. Since *viññāṇa* is used in two different contexts, the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series and the *khandhā*, one may expect different shades of meaning, although they are not clearly kept apart. In the former type of context, it is more of an inner functional unit, inner space, store-room; in the latter, more of concrete, conscious processes which are the inhabitants of this inner room.

# CHAPTER 5

# GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

We have seen that consciousness is like a seed that will grow if planted in suitable soil (*kamma*) and given sufficient moisture (*taṇhā*). But the seed grows already before being planted; it has to develop and ripen. This is done by absorbing and accumulating nutriment. Although this simile is not given in the Buddhist texts, we can envisage the process as corresponding to three further terms of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series: *upādāna*, *bhava* and *jāti*. Through *upādāna*, *viññāṇa* grows in this life, by engaging in activities, collecting merits and demerits, developing interests and accumulating memories etc. Through this process, *viññāṇa* "ripens" and prepares for a new life. But we shall further find that the meaning of *bhava* and *jāti* is not only rebirth in a limited sense. They may refer to all types of production and creation. And, after all, even rebirth is a production within this life, since all factors determining it are operating here and now.

## Collection and Building

*Upādāna* is the ninth link in the conventional *paṭiccasamuppāda* series, conditioned by *taṇhā*, "thirst", "craving", and a condition for *bhava*, "becoming". Its function is, generally speaking, to bridge the gap between craving and production.

*Upādāna* is clearly defined as a dynamic term. "At the time when a being lays aside this body but is not yet born into another body - this I say is built on craving. For craving becomes at that time *upādāna* (agent) for that" (*Yasmiṃ kho ... samaye imañ ca kāyaṃ nikkhipati satto ca aññataraṃ kāyaṃ anuppanno hoti, taṃ ahaṃ taṇhupādānaṃ vadāmi. Taṇhā hissa ... tasmiṃ samaye upādānaṃ hoti*, S IV 400). The text evidently refers to the belief that the last wish of a dying man is the force that produces and defines the new birth. The process is likened to

a fire, flung by the wind and so transported a long way: then the wind is the *upādāna* (agent) for this development. Other explanations of the term also place it in a rebirth-context. "The delight in body (sensation, ideation, activities, consciousness) is *upādāna*. Conditioned by *upādāna* is becoming" (*Yā rūpe nandi tad upādānaṃ, tassupādānapaccayā bhavo,* S III 14). "These five *upādāna*-factors have ambition for root ... Whatever is ambition and desire for the five *upādāna*-factors, that is *upādāna* of them" (*Ime kho ... pañc'upādānakkhandhā chandamūlakā ... Yo kho ... pañc'upādānakkhandhesu chandarāgo, taṃ tattha upādānaṃ,* M III 16). In this passage also it seems that *upādāna* would simply express the intensified wish that in itself can be sufficient cause for a certain type of rebirth. If this were always the case, the traditional rendering 'grasping' would be sufficient. But the following quotations will show that the meaning usually is somewhat different. "He is called an Ariyan disciple who reduces and does not heap up; who abandons and does not collect; who scatters and does not bind together; who quenches and does not kindle" (*Ayaṃ vuccati ... ariyasāvako apacināti no ācināti, pajahati na upādiyati, viseneti no usseneti, vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti,* S III 89). The text goes on to define what in this way is reduced, etc.; it is again body and the other personality factors.

In the last quotation we find the verb corresponding to *upādāna*, namely *upādiyati*; it is here correlated with verbs meaning "heap up", "bind", "kindle" and contrasted to *pajahati*, "abandon". It must therefore mean something like "grasp", "collect", "build up". According to S III 89, the Buddha's disciples do not heap up; but ordinary men who are to be reborn do heap up, bind, kindle. Another relevant text, that seems to show the function of *upādāna*, is M III 287. This gives a modified *paṭiccasamuppāda* series, beginning with sense perception and the attachment created through the sensations. "While he, observing the satisfaction, is attached, bound and infatuated, the five *upādāna*-factors go on to accumulation for the future" (*Tassa sārattassa saṃyuttassa sammūḷhassa assādānupassino viharato āyatiṃ pañcupādānakkhandhā upacayaṃ gacchanti*). And so his desire for again-becoming increases. It seems that the word

*upacaya* here corresponds closely to *upādāna*: experiences are desired, collected, remembered, built up. The same process is probably referred to in S III 94: "There is nothing in the world that I can grasp (and collect, build) without fault. Suppose I were to grasp body, sensation, ideation, the activities, consciousness. Conditioned by that *upādāna* of mine, becoming would take place ..." (*Natthi nu kho taṃ kiñci lokasmiṃ yaṃ ahaṃ upādiyamāno na vajjavā assaṃ; ahaṃ hi rūpaññeva upādiyamāno upādiyeyyaṃ ...; tassa me assa upādānapaccayā bhavo ...*).

*Upādāna* is closely connected with the five personality factors and with the process of or preparations for rebirth. I see it as the process of kammic memory. "The five personality factors are rooted in ambition" (*Pañcupādānakkhandhā chandamūlakā*, S III 100). In the earlier part of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series, craving is derived from sense-perceptions: these arise and are contained in *viññāṇa*. But it is also a well-known psychological fact that desires give rise to a heightened conscious activity: images of wanted objects appear, feelings, dreams of wish-fulfilment are produced, plans and thoughts are formed. This is expressed in the sequence *taṇhā* - *upādāna*: Through *taṇhā*, forms, feelings, ideas, etc. are produced and made conscious. These may be wishes and ambitions for the future: see S IV 400 quoted above, and M III 16, from which it becomes clear that these types of wishes were common practice among the people of that time: "As to this, it occurs to someone: may I have such a body in the future, may I have such sensations in the future", etc. (*Idha ... ekaccassa evaṃ hoti: evaṃrūpo siyaṃ anāgatamaddhānaṃ, evaṃvedano siyaṃ anāgatamaddhānaṃ ...*). Or they may be a selection of perceptions, activities, experiences which are produced according to the earlier part of the series. These are collected and stored through *upādāna*[1] and so a basis for further growth and development (through *bhava* and *jāti*) is laid.

This may be the reason why the personality factors are called *khandhā*, "piles", "accumulations". A literal translation would be "building-complexes". They are formed through the collecting and building activity of *upādāna*. In this way everybody builds his own personality: for this life but that also means for the next life; the laws of *kamma* determine both this life

and the next; an action will ripen and give fruit sometimes within this life, sometimes only as providing the setting for the next. Even in this life the factors *consist* of repeated experiences: there is no substance behind them.

One aspect of the process is described in S IV 102: "There are forms cognizable by the eye, forms desirable, pleasant, delightful and dear, lovable, exciting. If a monk is enamoured of them, if he welcomes them, if he persists in clinging to them ... then he will have consciousness depending on them, building on them ... But without building he becomes free" (*Santi kho ... cakkhuviññeyyā rūpā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmupasaṃhitā rajanīyā. Tañce bhikkhu abhinandati abhivadati ajjhosāya tiṭṭhati; tassa ... tannissitaṃ viññāṇaṃ hoti tadupādānaṃ ... Anupādāno ... bhikkhu parinibbāyati*). The same is repeated for the other senses. This seems to mean that conscious processes are produced through our perceptual mechanism; if we become interested and cannot let them go, our consciousness will lean on them and build on them, through *upādāna*-processes. In this way a store is laid up and a certain personality is formed. Through consciousness the process of rebirth is effected. It is possible that *bhava* refers to the process *viññāṇaṃ bhavati*, "consciousness grows, is produced". Cf. M III 261: "Therefore you must train yourself thus: 'I will not grasp after this world, and so no consciousness depending on this world *shall arise* in me'" (*Tasmātiha te ... evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ: Na idhalokaṃ upādiyissāmi, na ca me idhalokanissitaṃ viññāṇaṃ bhavissatīti*). It seems that we have no texts indicating a direct connection between *upādāna* and *kamma*. But in A I 223 *bhava* is explained in this way: "If there were no action to ripen in the element of sense-desire, would then development in the sensual world be known? - No" (*Kāmadhātuvepakkañ ca ... kammaṃ nābhavissa api nu kho kāmabhavo paññāyethāti? - No h'etaṃ*). Here also a relation of dependence is indicated: *kamma* is the condition of *kāmabhava*. We note that *kamma* here is put in the place of *upādāna*, although it does perhaps not represent only *upādāna* but the whole kammic process, of which *upādāna* is just a part, the collecting and building part. In A V 292 it is pointed out that actions are accumulated and lead to a result, in formulations that remind

us of *upādāna*, although the word is not used: "I declare that of intentional actions done and accumulated, there can be no wiping out without experiencing the result of them, whether this will happen in this world or in other conditions" (*Nāhaṃ ... sañcetanikānaṃ kammānaṃ katānaṃ upacitānaṃ appatisaṃviditvā vyantibhāvaṃ vadāmi, tañ ca kho diṭṭh'eva dhamme upapajjaṃ vā apare vā pariyāye*).

One aspect of the preparations for the next birth is therefore this: mental representations of desired visual objects, sounds, scents, tastes, touches, ideations (S IV 102), feelings, activities (S III 94) are created; the mind becomes preoccupied with them and forms intense wishes in connection with them. All this material is collected through *upādāna*, and the collections formed, continually during the whole life, manifest themselves in two ways: a personality of a certain type and with a certain orientation is produced, and this personality formation *is* the new rebirth personality, formed partly through the actions (among which all conscious processes are counted) and their moral qualities during the whole life and partly through the aspirations predominant in the conscious material. It should in this context not be forgotten that conscious processes are not illusory, unreal processes, but psycho-physical, and wishes have a real force; they are not only representations, they are self-realizing. *Viññāṇa* is not purely "mental"; if it had been, it would perhaps still be able to condition new *nāmarūpa* in the womb of a new mother, in the meaning of mental processes. But since the conscious processes produced are also what we call physical, *nāmarūpa* can grow to a new individual; the image of *rūpa*, "body", can congeal into an actual body.

In S II 3, *upādāna* in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* context is defined by enumerating its four parts: *kāmupādānaṃ diṭṭhupādānaṃ sīlabbatupādānaṃ attavādupādānaṃ*, "the building up of love-relations, of speculation, of rules and rituals, of a soul-theory". These seem to represent aspects of what we have just called personality formation in this life. We may form habits of sense-gratifications, a dependence on the world, and build up a pleasure-loving personality, a personality of extroverted libido-investments. We collect and remember information and

observations in order to explain the world, and become absorbed in theoretical constructions: a type of personality is formed, the abstract, speculative type. We form habits and formulate rules and laws; these may become important and dominate life, and a formalistic, compulsive mind is formed. Or we may misunderstand ourselves and form an exaggerated opinion about our own importance; we build up an ego-image and project it into eternity; this is again an edifice of mind.

All these four subdivisions of *upādāna* clearly show that this word refers to a continuous building process going on during this life, dominating it and forming a kammic basis for the future. But it seems that the four types mentioned are just examples: many others were possible, and are, as a matter of fact, mentioned in the texts: M II 237 mentions the following objects of *upādāna*: speculation concerning the past (*pubbantānudiṭṭhi*), speculation concerning the future (*aparantānudiṭṭhi*), the fetter of love (*kāmasaṃyojana*), the joy of seclusion (*pavivekā pīti*), desireless happiness (*nirāmisa sukha*), neutral sensation (*adukkhamasukhā vedanā*), and even the thought: "I am free from grasping" (*anupādāno 'ham asmīti*). All these thoughts may be valued and therefore kept present in the mind, collected. Even achievements on the Buddhist way may be treasured too much. The text goes on to say that all this is created and gross (*Tayidaṃ saṅkhataṃ oḷārikaṃ*) and that it should be abandoned. Please note that *upādāna* here is combined with *saṅkhata*, "created"; an aspect of the meaning is thus explained.

To wish for and create a new body is also reprehensible: "Whoever lays down this body and collects another body, of him I say he is to be blamed" (*Yo kho ... imañ ca kāyaṃ nikkhipati aññaṃ ca kāyaṃ upādiyati, tam ahaṃ Sa-upavajjo ti vadāmi*, M III 266). This text again points out the active part which the individual plays in the process of rebirth, just as the following: "You must train yourself thus: 'I will not grasp after (build up) this world and so no consciousness dependent on this world shall arise in me'" (M III 261). The same is said about "a world beyond", and then the text concludes: "As I will not grasp after (build up) that which is here seen, heard, sensed, cognized, sought after, pondered over with the mind (*diṭṭhaṃ*

*sutaṃ mutaṃ viññātaṃ pariyesitaṃ anuvicaritaṃ manasā*), I will have no consciousness dependent on it". But this text especially stresses the preparatory activity in the present life: through our perceptual processes this world is created, also the imaginary world of theories and speculations. Consciousness is dependent on the world when it forms images of it, values it, theorizes about it, clings to it, forms wishful dreams about it; this preoccupation with the world leads to a prolonged existence there.

"Through building comes the idea 'I am'" (*Upādāya ... asmīti hoti*, S III 105): this means that the misunderstanding of one's own nature, the belief in a substance behind the processes comes through *upādāna*. The text continues by asking: building on what? Answer: building on body, sensation, ideation, activities, consciousness. By identifying oneself with the personal processes (M I 138 f) and building character traits by habit formation, perceptual habits, emotional reaction patterns, these types of misconceptions arise.

Even the different levels of *samādhi* may be too much valued, and consciousness may try to build on them: "While he rejoices in this equanimity, approves of it and cleaves to it, consciousness becomes dependent on it, building on it ... This is the best type of building, namely the level of neither-ideation-nor-non-ideation" (*Tassa taṃ upekkhaṃ abhinandato abhivadato ajjhosāya tiṭṭhato tan nissitaṃ hoti viññāṇaṃ tad upādānaṃ ... Upādānaseṭṭhaṃ h'etaṃ ... yadidaṃ nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ*, M II 265). Although this level is one of the best states of consciousness in this world and offers the highest plane of rebirth, this plane ~~not~~ being *sankhata*, "created" (M II 231), even these states should not be treasured and collected, for only "a monk without collecting attains nibbāna" (*Anupādāno ... bhikkhu parinibbāyati*, M II 265).

This section can be briefly summed up in this way. *Taṇhā* is the process of craving and is therefore a creative force. It causes an activity of collecting and building. Mainly sense experience and personality processes (*rūpa, vedanā*, etc.) are collected and built. In this way a personality is formed - a continuous creative process during the whole life. This is the

process of kammic memory. Since many of these processes are or may become conscious, carried by desire, they are real forces working through *viññāṇa* and therefore self-realizing in congenial conditions. Since there is no difference between conscious and material processes, rebirth is a natural process, flowing like a wave from existence to existence.

## Growth

*Bhava* is a noun derived from the root *bhū*, "become", and the meaning is "coming into existence", "origin", "genesis". Although the word probably always has this vague and general meaning, it has come to be mainly associated with rebirth. In the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series it is placed between *upādāna* and *jāti*. In A I 223, *bhava* is clearly defined as *āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbatti*, "production of again-becoming in the future", and the three types of *bhava*, namely *kāmabhava*, *rūpabhava* and *arūpabhava*, which are also mentioned as the three types of *bhava* in *paṭiccasamuppāda* context (S II 3), are clearly linked to the process of rebirth and defined as "becoming in the world of love, in the world of form and in the world of formlessness". In D III 147 we find *bhava* coordinated with *jāti* and *niketa*: *Yaṃ ... purimaṃ jātiṃ purimaṃ bhavaṃ purimaṃ niketaṃ ...*, "whatever former birth, former becoming, former abode ..."; the terms are certainly meant to be more or less synonymous.

A more general meaning is found in many contexts: *Nandībhavaparikkhaya* (S I 2), "the ending of the development of joy"; *aññathābhāvī bhavasatto loko bhavam evābhinandati* (S IV 23), "the world delights in *bhava* (growth), since it changes and is liable to grow"; *rūpesu disvā vibhavaṃ bhavañ ca* (SN 867), "having seen decay and growth in forms, (man forms an opinion about the world)". See also SN 870:

> *Phassanidānaṃ sātaṃ asātaṃ,*
> *phasse asante na bhavanti h'ete,*
> *'vibhavaṃ bhavañ cāpi' yam etaṃ atthaṃ,*
> *etaṃ te pabrūmi itonidānaṃ.*

"Pleasant and unpleasant are caused by contact; if there is no contact, they do not develop. From this cause, I tell you, is the meaning of development and decay". In A IV 70, the Buddha describes the hypothetical case of a monk who attains equanimity by thinking "what is and has developed, that I abandon" (*yad atthi, yaṃ bhūtaṃ, taṃ pajahāmi*), and then he does not long for development (*bhave na rajjati*). In all these examples, *bhava* seems to signify a continuous process of growth, development or change of certain factors within the personality: joy, pleasant and unpleasant feelings; the quotation from A IV 70 perhaps refers to *kamma*-effects or the growth of the personality factors. Cf. M III 259: *Na cakkhum upādiyissāmi, na ca me cakkhunissitaṃ viññāṇaṃ bhavissati*, "I shall not build up an eye and so shall not develop consciousness built on eye". In this and many similar cases, the verb *bhavati* seems to refer to a certain personality development leading to a new existence. *Bhava* is also one of the influxes, and these are easiest to understand as flowing processes in the present life, as an inflow of growth factors, of ignorance, of love, of speculation (*bhavāsava, avijjāsava, kāmāsava, diṭṭhāsava*). So, when SN 472 speaks about *bhavāsavā yassa ... atthagatā na santi*, we get the most natural meaning if we translate "in whom the inflowing processes of growth ... have come to rest and are no more". Since the coming rebirth is actually being prepared through a psychological development during the entire present life, we have in reality not two distinct meanings of the word but rather two different phases of the same process. M III 244 seems to shed some light on the process. It is described how a monk should reject all the levels of *samādhi* as "something created": *sankhataṃ etaṃ*. "He therefore neither creates nor intends for growth nor for decay", and so "he builds up nothing in the world, is free from trouble and attains nibbāna: ended is birth ..." (*So n'eva abhisankharoti nābhisañcetayati bhavāya vā vibhavāya vā ... na kiñci loke upādiyati anupādiyaṃ na paritassati aparitassaṃ paccattaṃ yeva parinibbāyati: Khīṇā jāti ...*). The whole life is a continuous process of intentional creation (*sankhāra*), building up (*upādāna*), and growth, which involves all the personality developments produced by activities, experiences,

wishes, ambitions and thoughts but also forming the basis of the next life, i.e. the *kamma*-accumulation which is said to provide the soil for new growth.

If sensual pleasures, love-relations and libido-investments are cultivated and collected in the present life, this can be called a case of *kāma-bhava* which is a preparation for "rebirth in the *kāma*-world" (i.e. the world of human beings and animals, the purgatories and some of the lower heavens) which is the ordinary meaning of *kāma-bhava.* In the same way, *rūpabhava* can refer to a growth of form experiences, the perceptual or visionary development, perhaps especially the development of a personal perceptual world of visionary experiences, and *arūpabhava* can mean the growth of independence of form, the turning away from concrete experiences, the development of abstract states of mind, as attained in the higher levels of *samādhi*. These states of mind were systematically developed by Buddhist monks, partly as a way of living in this world, a method of escape from *kāma* and other unwholesome states of mind, partly as a preparation for rebirth on higher planes or for freedom from all types of rebirth attainable through complete emptiness. If a monk refuses to create, grow, build up in this life, there will also be no growth to a future life.

## Birth

The eleventh link of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series is *jāti*, "birth", usually translated "rebirth". In this context it certainly refers to the next life of any human being. The definition is: "That which, of this and that being in this and that group, is birth, origin, descent, reproduction, appearance of factors, acquiring of sense-modalities, this is called birth" (*Yā tesaṃ tesaṃ sattānaṃ tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho, ayaṃ vuccati jāti*, S II 3). This is also clearly expressed in S II 101: "Where in the future is renewed becoming and production, there is in the future birth, old age and death" (*Yattha atthi āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbatti atthi tattha āyatiṃ*

*jātijarāmaraṇaṃ*). In M I 139 we find the expression *ponobhaviko jātisaṃsāro*, "the birth-cycle of again-becoming". In M II 20 the Buddha refers to the method he had developed in order to make it possible to remember previous lives, and the word he uses in this context is *jāti: ekam pi jātiṃ, dve pi jātiyo ... jātisatasahassam pi*, "one birth, two births ... a hundred thousand births".

Although this is probably the central and essential meaning of the word in *paṭiccasamuppāda*-context, there is certainly more to it. This is, e.g. suggested in M I 161, where it is said: "someone liable to birth by himself seeks what is likewise liable to birth" (*ekacco attanā jātidhammo samāno jātidhammañ-ñeva pariyesati*). This means that the human being feels attracted to things of the same nature as his own, and the text goes on to enumerate some things that are likewise "liable to birth": sons and wife, slaves, goats, sheep, cocks, swine, elephants, cows, horses, even gold and silver. All these items are possessions (they are summed up in the phrase *jātidhammā upadhayo* which here probably means possessions, cf. SN 33) that are usually treasured by human beings. Although the text goes on to call them all "liable to ageing" and "liable to death", *jāti* in this case certainly is not meant to refer to rebirth; gold and silver cannot be reborn. Certainly the Buddha only meant that they can be obtained and lost, they come and go, are impermanent. This is a considerable widening and generalizing of the concept.

Still more generalized is the meaning which we find in S IV 26 f, where it is said that *sabbaṃ jātidhammaṃ*, "the all is liable to birth". "The all" is then defined as *cakkhuṃ ... rūpā ... cakkhuviññāṇaṃ ... cakkhusamphasso ... yaṃ cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhaṃ asukhaṃ vā*, i.e. "eye, forms, eye-consciousness, eye-stimulation, the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral sensation arising because of eye-stimulation". The same is repeated for the other senses, including *mano*, "the inner sense". Then they all are called liable to ageing, illness, death, etc. It should be noted that the enumerated concepts form the whole of the first part of *paṭiccasamuppāda* as given in S IV 86; they are all per-

ceptual terms. What is meant is, therefore, the whole world as perceived.

It might be objected that *jāti* in this sense is not found in *paṭiccasamuppāda*-context. Consider, however, a text like S II 73 (see Fig. 1), where the question is asked: *Katamo ... lokassa samudayo?* "What is the arising of the world?" As reply, a version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series is given, beginning with the senses: eye and forms, ear and sounds etc., and containing the crucial words *bhava* and *jāti*. And the passage concludes: "this is the arising of the world".

Here the series is evidently meant to explain the production of the perceived world. But it is not the real world - it is rather a constructed world, the deceptive world of man's own illusions and misunderstandings evoked by his own desires. When ignorance (*avijjā*) is dispelled through understanding (*paññā*) the individual can dispel the illusions and reach "the end of the world".

*Jāti* has two more meanings, but they seem to be natural developments of its primary meaning of "birth" and have nothing to do with *paṭiccasamuppāda*. We find it used as a word for species, and as such it is used for different types of animals and even plants, see e.g. SN 601 ff (where the theory of rebirth does not seem implied). We also find it used for family and lineage, e.g. in SN 104 which criticises the man who is proud of his *jāti*, and in A I 166 where a man is called *anupakkuṭṭho jātivādena*, "without reproach in respect of birth". These examples also seem to have nothing to do with rebirth.

## Development

Taken together, the three concepts analysed in this chapter are used to describe a development of something new. The word development is here used partly in the same sense as in Western psychology, in as much as it may refer to a formation of a personality by learning, acquiring habits and interests, by active work to achieve aims. But in addition, there is usually some reference to a future life, which is missing in Western

psychology. The scale of values is also quite different. Psychology usually speaks of development in a positive sense: it is considered normal and desirable that a human being should be active, expansive, acquisitive and interested. In Buddhism, the three words *upādāna*, *bhava*, and *jāti* have negative overtones, and we shall see in a later chapter that the Buddhist ideal is reduction rather than development: a Buddhist should be "freed" from the types of "development" that the ordinary man considers desirable. In Buddhism, then, "reduction" has the same positive value as we attach to "development".

Since the aim of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series is to explain how suffering arises, in all its forms, it is natural that we have found *bhava* and *jāti* to have rather general meanings. We will find them referring to the development of everything that is considered false, unrealistic and undesirable. It is therefore not contrary to the spirit of Buddhism to suggest, as Bhikkhu Buddhadasa (1974, p.3.) has done, that *jāti* refers to "the arising of the false notion of 'I' and 'mine'", even if no text can be quoted as support for it.

# CHAPTER 6

# PERCEPTION AND FEELING

A correct understanding of the nature of perception is considered most important in Buddhism. By perception the world is created; by understanding and mastering perception, the world can be mastered. Through perception comes happiness and suffering; who masters his perceptual process, masters his personal state of mind. The main problems of the Buddhist in this respect are, then, understanding and mastering.

The purpose of perception is, as we see it, to provide information about the world around us and about the processes in our own bodies. According to the modern interpretation this is effected by a number of sense-organs and the nervous system. The sense-organs are sensitive to a special type of stimulus, light-waves, sound-waves, solutions of chemical substances, etc.: the stimulus is transformed into electrochemical pulses which are conducted through neurones to the central nervous system, where they are confronted with earlier information, interpreted and integrated into some sort of "experience", perhaps concretely as a "mental image".

The Buddhist analysis is similar, but we should of course not expect to find any description of the physiological processes. Only the conscious aspect of perception was known to the Buddha. Still he did not consider the world as merely subjective; he knew that our senses can deceive us, but the world's existence, in the form of conditioned processes, was taken for granted. A few quotations will substantiate these important statements. Contact with fire is normally very painful, but it happens that a leper may "receive a distorted impression and find it pleasant" (*kuṭṭhī ... dukkhasamphasse yeva aggismiṃ sukham iti viparītasaññaṃ paccalattha*, M I 507). The information transmitted by our senses can therefore not be accepted uncritically. If a blind man were to say: "There is no moon or sun and there is nobody who is able to see them. I don't know them, I don't see them, therefore they don't exist" (*n'atthi candima-*

*suriyā, n'atthi candima-suriyānaṃ dassāvi. Ahaṃ etaṃ na jānāmi, ahaṃ etaṃ na passāmi, tasmā taṃ n'atthi*, D II 328) - if he were to say so, he would not be right, because "there is a moon and a sun" (*atthi candima-suriyā*). "This world does not exist" (*n'atthi ayam loko*) is one of the false views (A I 269). But the world is also "in this very fathom-long body, endowed with perception and inner sense" (A II 48).

The Buddhist ideal is to become "a world-knower, wise, world-ender" (*lokavidū sumedho lokantagū*, A II 49). To this purpose, the nature of perception has to be understood. Many formulations of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* idea, among them the standard form, include an outline of the perceptual process. But we have also a special sequence, already referred to, that ends: "This is the arising of the world" (S II 73). Here the passage will be quoted in full: "Depending on eye and forms visual consciousness arises; the combination of the three is contact; depending on contact there is sensation; depending on sensation there is craving; depending on craving there is collecting; depending on collecting there is growth (becoming); depending on growth there is birth; depending on birth, old age and death, grief, lamenting, suffering, distress and despair arise. This is the origin of the world". (*Cakkhuṃ ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ; tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso; phassapaccayā vedanā; vedanāpaccayā taṇhā; taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ; upādānapaccayā bhavo; bhavapaccayā jāti; jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. Ayaṃ lokassa samudayo.*) The same passage is repeated, starting from the other sense fields: ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and tangible objects, the inner sense (*mano*) and mental images. Then comes a passage which describes how the world is made to disappear (*lokassa atthangamo*). The formulation is here perhaps still more interesting. It starts exactly like the version already quoted, but when it is said that craving will arise depending on sensation, the formulation is changed: "by the utter fading away and ceasing of craving, collecting ceases; by the ceasing of collecting, growth ceases", etc. This sequence of conditions can be represented graphically (see Fig. 1).

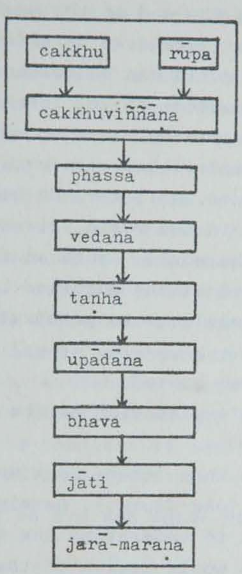



Fig. 1. "The origin of the world".

The world must be thoroughly known, because it is identical with *kāmaguṇa*, i.e. the five sense-fields, by which we are tempted and enslaved: "These five love-objects are called the world in the code of the noble one; what five? Forms, cognized by the eye, longed for, alluring, pleasurable, lovely, bound up with passion and desire; sounds ..., smells ..., tastes ..., contacts ..." (A IV 430). The end of suffering cannot be attained without attaining the end of the world (*na ca panāham .... apatvā lokassa antaṃ dukkhassa antakiriyaṃ vadāmi*, S IV 93). But the end of the world can be reached by understanding and making oneself independent of it. Therefore, the wise man "learns the end of the world by becoming calm and does not hope for this world or another" (*lokassa antaṃ samitāvī ñatvā nāsiṃsati lokaṃ imaṃ parañ cāti*, A II 49). He becomes like the Tathāgata who "grows up in the world, rises above the world and stays unsoiled by the world - just as the lotus grows in water, rises above it and stands unsoiled by it" (S III 140).

To understand the world is to penetrate its conditioned origin, as described by the version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series that has just been quoted.

As I see it, this "explanation of the world" can be read in two different ways:

(a) S III 139 says that "there is a world-condition in the world" (*Atthi ... loke loka-dhammo*), namely the five personality factors. If we want to understand the series with this information in mind, we would arrive at the following interpretation: the link *upādāna* refers to the building up of a personality; by the transformation, creation and growth of a personality in this life and the next, a condition for a prolonged or renewed creation and perception of the world is made possible. See our discussion of *upādāna* in the previous chapter.

(b) The whole series may describe nothing more than the appearance and disappearance of the perceptual world. The precondition of this interpretation is that *jāti* and *maraṇa* can mean something more than birth and death in the ordinary physiological sense. We have already shown that this is possible: all things and sense data are subject to birth and death. See especially the passage quoted from S IV 26 f. I therefore think

it quite possible that our quoted version of the *paticcasamuppāda* series is an attempt to explain the dynamics of the perceptual process. We will return to this later in the chapter.

Contact

Three factors are necessary for perception within each sense modality, as described in S II 73 (quoted above), e.g. eye, forms, and visual consciousness. It should be noted that the sense objects (*rūpa*, "form", etc.) are described as external but that the same word is used for the experienced form; this follows from passages like D III 260: "When somebody experiences forms inside himself, he will see forms outside ..." (*Ajjhattaṃ rūpa-saññī eko bahiddhā rūpāni passati* ...). This may seem strange to us because we know that the stimulus-object is something unknown and very different from the seen object, but our own language also expresses the same way of thinking, since words like "object" and "form" are used to refer to both the objective fact and our subjective image of it. In Buddhist psychology, however, this describes a very important aspect, since the world of objects consists of *sankhārā*, "creations". Cf. the two derivations of consciousness:

S II 73: "Depending on eye and forms visual consciousness arises"

S II 2: "Depending on *sankhārā* consciousness arises"

We have already seen that all perceived things are *sankhārā*. The objective world, according to Buddhism, is no different from the experienced world: it simply consists of the subjective world projected by our mind (just as we by projection "see" a human face in a meaningless inkblot: the blot is there but we project our meaning into it); it is continuously created and destroyed, it is dynamic and produced by forces experienced by us, and consciousness is a necessary aspect of it.

Of the remaining sense-organs and their objects, only the last pair will need some comment, namely *mano* and *dhammā*. *Mano*, "the inner sense", is described as a rather independent centre

which can produce thoughts but also feelings and wishes. It can therefore not always easily be distinguished from *citta*, "the mind". Its main function is, however, to experience or produce *dhammā*. This word is very vague, its literal meaning being "bearer" or "support". Possible renderings in this context would be "image", "mental process", "phenomenon", "thing". It refers mainly to images produced by memory and imagination and not based on simultaneous external stimuli. One of the special functions of *mano* is to produce such "free" images. "All things that are unskilled, connected with the unskilled, leading to the unskilled, all these are preceded (i.e. controlled) by the inner sense" (*Ye keci ... dhammā akusalā akusalabhāgiyā akusalapakkhikā sabbe te manopubbangamā*, A I 11). "From this body he calls up another body, formed, produced by the inner sense, provided with all limbs and details, not deprived of any function" (*So imamhā kāyā aññaṃ kāyaṃ abhinimmināti rūpiṃ manomayaṃ sabbangapaccangiṃ ahīnindriyaṃ*, D I 77). But the texts rarely make any distinction between internal images and external objects; they were, as a matter of fact, often confused. In the following passage, the adjective "external" is added: "When the inner sense is intact and external things (or images?) come within its range and there is the appropriate impact, then there is an appearance of the appropriate section of consciousness" (*Yato ... ajjhattiko c'eva mano aparibhinno hoti bāhirā ca dhammā āpāthaṃ āgacchanti tajjo ca samannāhāro hoti, evaṃ tajjassa viññāṇabhāgassa pātubhāvo hoti*, M I 191). It is uncertain whether this refers to external objects or to images taken from a store and made conscious. Since the passage quoted above from S II 73 has exactly the same formulation for *dhammā* as for the other sense-objects, it must be assumed that the images are kept somewhere in readiness for the contact leading to consciousness. Still more doubtful is this in the famous statement in Dhammapada (v. 1): "Things are controlled by the inner sense, surpassed by the inner sense, made by the inner sense" (*Manopubbangamā dhammā manoseṭṭhā manomayā*). This has been interpreted in many ways, but the context seems to indicate that *dhammā* here refers to the intentions behind everything a person

says and does, i.e. to purely mental images. Of course the mental images are, according to early Buddhism, no less real than the external objects - neither are real except as processes. And, as a matter of fact, the Buddha tended to trust his free images (what we would call visions) more than his sense perceptions. Nor were the external objects interpreted as mental images only - the Buddha was no idealist. But both are different degrees of "coarseness" in the same type of process; *mano* played an important part in the creation of both (*manosankhāra* is sometimes the word used to describe the process). Therefore no real difference is intended when *mano* is said to create the processes and when it is said that it perceives them, as in D II 338: "(the body) ... discerns things with the inner sense" (*kāyo ... manasā pi dhammaṃ vijānāti*). All perception is partly production.

"Depending on eye and forms visual consciousness arises" (S II 73). This probably means that if we can see an object by means of the eyes, we will be visually conscious of it, i.e., we will have a conscious visual image of it. But when the text goes on to say that the combination of eye, forms and visual consciousness is *phassa*, "contact", and produces *vedanā*, "sensation", the word *viññāṇa* seems to be used in a different sense, namely visual consciousness as a dimension of experience. For if we did not have the power of experiencing, the power of forming mental images, then the object, seen through the eye, would not produce its conscious counterpart. These are exactly the two meanings we found earlier when we analysed *viññāṇa*: the empty room and its concrete contents, or, in a different terminology, the dimension and the processes operating in it.

In this context there is no indication that *phassa* is a word for any sensory experience. Perhaps it just refers to the fact that the three factors are present at the same time and brought in touch with each other. Then the conscious reaction would come only in the form of *vedanā*. The translation "contact" is preferable as neutral and noncommittal.

Or is *phassa* itself a conscious process? There are indications to that effect. We are then reminded of a distinction made in Western psychology: (a) the external stimulus, (b) stimula-

tion (this is an event in the sense organ and is not conscious), (c) sensation (the coded stimulus-information has reached cortex and produces an undifferentiated conscious experience, for instance of light, of noise, of a smell), (d) perception (the information is interpreted and identified), (e) feeling (the perception, and perhaps already the sensation, is evaluated from the individual point of view). If *phassa* is a conscious act, it could correspond to sensation according to this analysis. In S II 97 f attempts are made to explain *phassa*. "Just as heat is produced when two sticks are rubbed against each other ... so a pleasant feeling is produced from a pleasant contact" (*sukhavedaniyaṃ phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati sukhavedanā*). Here the contact itself is called pleasant, which would imply that it is conscious.

*Phassa* is the stimulus that initiates all sorts of mental activities: "Contacted one feels. Contacted one thinks. Contacted one forms mental images" (*Phuṭṭho ... vedeti phuṭṭho ceteti phuṭṭho sañjānāti*, S IV 68). *Phassa* is said to condition three of the five personality factors: *Phassasamudayā vedanāsamudayo*, "from the arising of contact comes the arising of sensation"; *Phassasamudayā saññāsamudayo*, "from the arising of contact comes the arising of ideation"; *Phassasamudayā sankhārasamudayo*, "from the arising of contact comes the arising of activities" (S III 60). On the highest level of *samādhi* there is no conscious activity: *saññā* and *vedanā* are suspended. But when the meditator emerges from this level, it is said (M I 302) that he is first stimulated by the three types of *phassa: suññato phasso, animitto phasso, appaṇihito phasso*, "empty contact, signless contact, undirected contact". These words seem to refer to the first mental contents appearing in his formerly empty consciousness; he notices that his consciousness was empty, had no objects and no direction. In this case, *phassa* certainly refers to a conscious process.

We must then leave *phassa* somewhat unclearly defined. There are contexts where it certainly signifies a conscious process, somewhat like "sensation" in Western terminology. But in other contexts it seems to mean simply a contact giving rise to a conscious process: this latter is then something

different and is called *vedanā*.

To say, as we have done, that perception is achieved through contact with external objects, seems to contradict what we have insisted on earlier, namely that the world according to Buddhism is created through the perceptual process. It is, however, not a contradiction from a Buddhist point of view, since the real existence of the world was never denied. Even from a European point of view it need not be taken as a contradiction: we know quite well that the objective world is not what it looks like. Our perceptual world is a personal creation (*sankhāra*) to a surprisingly great extent.

## Sensation and Feeling

*Vedanā* is conditioned by *phassa*. The PTS dictionary gives two translations, "feeling" and "sensation", and our main problem is to decide which of these is more correct.

*Vedanā* are usually said to be three or five: *sukhā vedanā dukkhā vedanā adukkhamasukhā vedanā*, " pleasant, unpleasant and neutral" (S IV 232); *sukhindriyaṃ dukkhindriyaṃ somanassindriyaṃ domanassindriyaṃ upekkhindriyaṃ imā vuccanti ... pañcavedanā*, "the moods of pleasure, pain, joy, grief and indifference: these are called the five *vedanā*" (S IV 232). These are evidently types of feeling. The same sutta refers to a *kāyikā vedanā* and a *cetasikā vedanā*, "bodily and mental". This distinction should be compared with an explanation in D II 306, according to which "bodily pain" (*kāyika dukkha*) is produced through bodily contact (*kāya-samphassaja*) and grief (*domanassa*) is a mental pain produced through mental contact (*cetasika dukkha manosamphassaja*). *Vedanā* is here, as in most cases, defined in terms of feeling and clearly refers to an evaluating function, but the distinctions made still show that "feeling" is not a suitable translation into English. In English, "feeling" is always either pleasant or unpleasant; an expression like "neutral feeling" does not exist. But we can speak about a neutral sensation. In English usage, all sensations are neutral, but they immediately become, in most cases, either pleasant or

unpleasant through an addition of a subjective reaction and evaluation; this is called feeling. From this point of view, "sensation" is to be preferred as translation of *vedanā*, and we shall find that a distinction between the mere reception and registration of information (i.e. sensation) and the subjective reaction to it was actually made also in Buddhism.

*Vedanā* are also classified with regard to the six senses: *cakkhusamphassajā, sota-, ghāna-, jivhā-, kāya-, manosamphassajā*, "produced through eye-contact, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-contact". This may refer either to feelings based on visual sensations, etc., or to sensations produced through visual stimulation etc. S IV 233 seems to make a distinction between *vedanā* and the pleasant or unpleasant component: "The pleasure and happiness which arise conditioned by *vedanā*, - that is the satisfaction in *vedanā*. The misery of *vedanā* is the impermanence, the pain, the unsubstantial nature of *vedanā*" (*Yaṃ vedanaṃ paṭicca uppajjati sukhaṃ somanassaṃ ayaṃ vedanāya assādo; yā vedanā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā ayaṃ vedanāya ādīnavo*). From this passage seems to follow that *vedanā* is not the feeling itself, but the basis of feeling, just as we would say that sensation is what comes first and the feeling a subjective reaction to it. More important is perhaps the conclusion that can be drawn from M I 398-400 where the Buddha develops a scale of pleasures (*sukha*). There is pleasure to be attained from the five types of love-objects (*kāmaguṇā*), but better is the pleasure felt in the first *jhāna*. But even this is inferior to the pleasure in the second *jhāna*. Each level of *samādhi* gives a greater pleasure than the preceding one. The highest type of pleasure is experienced in *saññāvedayitanirodha*, "the cessation of ideation and sensation". "For the Master does not declare that it is only pleasant sensation that belongs to pleasure" (*Na kho ... Bhagavā sukhaṃ yeva vedanaṃ sandhāya sukhasmiṃ paññāpeti*). There is, then, pleasure that is not pleasant *vedanā*. Even the highest level of *samādhi*, where all *vedanā* have ceased, is the highest level of pleasure.

*Vedanā* sometimes refers to painful feeling in connection with illness. When the Buddha had died, Anuruddha said about

him: "With active mind he endured the pain" (*asallīnena cittena vedanaṃ ajjhavāsayi*, D II 157). And in S V 381, Sāriputta says to a layman who is ill: "If you could see perfect faith in the Buddha within yourself, your pains would subside in a moment". There are pains (*vedayitāni*) that originate from bile, phlegm, wind, the union of bodily humours, from changes of the seasons, from unpleasant surprises, from sudden attacks from without, and also from the ripeness of one's *kamma* (*Pittasamuṭṭhānāni, semhasamuṭṭhānāni, vātasamuṭṭhānāni, sannipātikāni, utupariṇāmajāni, visamaparihārajāni, opakkamikāni, kammavipākajāni*, S IV 230).

Although the translation "feeling" sometimes cannot be avoided when this aspect is obviously stressed, we will prefer "sensation" in this book, partly because the distinction between the information and the subjective reaction actually was made in the Pali scriptures, partly because we have to conform with English usage. And there may actually be one more reason: From many formulations one gets the impression that the pleasant and unpleasant qualities are inherent in the objects and that these qualities are merely perceived. See, for instance, S IV 158: "There are objects cognizable by the eye, objects desirable, pleasant, delightful and dear, passion-fraught, inciting to lust" (*Santi ... cakkhuviññeyyā rūpā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasaṃhitā rajanīyā*). The objects themselves are pleasant, they are not said to produce pleasant feelings in the observer. "When pleasing visual objects and visual consciousness are found together, then, conditioned by the pleasant contact, a pleasant sensation will arise" (*Saṃvijjati kho ... cakkhudhāturūpā ca manāpā cakkhuviññāṇaṃ ca sukhavedaniyaṃ phassaṃ paṭicca uppajjati sukhā vedanā*, S IV 114). Here all the links are pleasant: because the objects are pleasant, the contact and the resulting sensations are pleasant. In this case the pleasantness would not be a subjective feeling but a perceived quality in the object, i.e. a true sensation. But it is not certain that this means anything more than a linguistic lack of precision, just as we in English speak about pleasant objects although we very well know that the objects are neutral: the feelings are only in us. There are no pleasing objects;

only we may be pleased.

*Vedanā* is a link in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series. This series should be used as a tool to master the undesirable elements in the human personality and realize nibbāna. We are therefore not surprised to find that "the pleasure or pain or neutral sensation that arise depending on contact with the eye (and other senses) should be abandoned" (*Yam pidaṃ cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkham asukhaṃ vā, taṃ pi pahātabbaṃ*, S IV 16). The method of abandoning them is "superknowledge and full comprehension" (*abhiññā pariññā*), according to S IV 16, and the noble eightfold way according to S III 60. This involves conscious analysis and transformation: "Pleasant sensation should be seen as suffering; unpleasant sensation should be seen as an arrow (as a sting); neutral sensation should be seen as impermanent" (*Sukhā ... vedanā dukkhato daṭṭhabbā; dukkhā vedanā sallato daṭṭhabbā; adukkhamasukhā vedanā aniccato daṭṭhabbā*, S IV 207). When the disciple has been successful, he can say: "My former sensation I destroy, and I set going no new sensation" (*purānañca vedanaṃ paṭihankhāmi navañca vedanaṃ na uppādessāmi*, S IV 104, D III 130). According to these statements, it would be possible to eradicate feelings and sensations. As we have seen, this is achieved through *samādhi*. But this cannot be a permanent state. *Vedanā* is also used about illness, and illness cannot always be avoided, even by an arahant. And even "the well-taught disciple of the noble one feels pleasant sensation, unpleasant sensation and neutral sensation" (*Sutavā ... ariyasāvako sukham pi vedanaṃ vediyati dukkham pi vedanaṃ vediyati adukkhamasukham pi vedanaṃ vediyati*, S IV 207 f) - just as ordinary people. The difference is that the pain felt by the arahant is only of the bodily type. Further, he is not upset by his sensations and has no repugnance for painful sensation (*dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighavā na hoti*, S IV 209). If he feels a painful, pleasant or neutral sensation, he feels them as one that is freed from bondage (*visaññutto naṃ vediyati*). "If a monk sees a delightful object with the eye, he does not hanker for it, does not thrill thereat, does not develop lust for it. His body is unmoved, his mind is unmoved, inwardly well established and released. If he sees a

repulsive object with the eye, he is not shocked thereat, his mind is not unsettled or depressed or resentful because of that" (*bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā manāpaṃ nābhijjhati nābhikaṃsati na rāgaṃ janeti; tassa ṭhito ca kāyo hoti ṭhitaṃ cittaṃ ajjhattaṃ susaṇṭhitaṃ suvimuttaṃ; cakkhunā kho paneva rūpaṃ disvā amanāpaṃ na maṅku hoti; apatiṭṭhitacitto ādīnamānaso avyāpannacetaso*, S V 74). Mindfulness is cultivated in order to attain the right understanding of the *vedanā* and a realistic attitude to them: "If mindfulness and concentration on in- and out-breathing is developed and perfected, then he knows, when he feels a pleasant sensation: 'it is impermanent'. He understands: 'I am not interested, I do not enjoy it'" (*Evam bhāvite kho ... ānāpānasati-samādhimhi evam bahulīkate sukhañ ce vedanaṃ vediyati, Sā aniccā ti pajānāti, Anajjhositā ti pajānāti, Anabhinanditā ti pajānāti*, S V 319).

One reason for the apparent contradictions between the different functions of the word *vedanā* may be the different requirements in *khandha*-context and *paṭiccasamuppāda*-context. *Vedanā* as a conditioned process is stressed in the latter. Even as a personality factor it is defined in process-terms in S III 60, but it is understood that these factors cannot be got rid of until death - although their functioning can be suspended temporarily.

Perhaps these sections about *phassa* and *vedanā* can be summed up in this way. *Phassa* is the contact between the factors necessary for perception. Contact immediately produces a sensation, so *phassa* may mainly refer to the experienced contact, primary to perception, but not to perception itself. *Vedanā* immediately follows: this would mainly be the sensation, although the aspect of feeling is always more stressed than the information aspect. There is a marked tendency to attribute the qualities of feeling to qualities in the objects. The perceptual information will become complete only in a final perceptual act; the proper word for this is *saññā*. We would therefore expect this word to occur after *vedanā* in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series. It actually does, as the sequence is given in M I 112 and D III 289. These variants will be discussed in other contexts. In the standard series we find it included among the *nāma*-factors of

the fourth link. It is also one of the five personality factors.

Ideation

*Saññā* is defined in M I 293: "He perceives, he perceives: it is therefore called *saññā*. And what does he perceive? He perceives what is green, yellow, red, white" (*Sañjānāti sañjānāti kho ..., tasmā saññā ti vuccati, kiñ ca sañjānāti: nīlakampi sañjānāti, pītakampi sañjānāti, lohitakampi sañjānāti, odātampi sañjānāti*). The verb *sañjānāti* is here translated by "perceive", and *saññā* would correspondingly be "perception", which is also the most common translation. The same page also lays down a close affinity between *saññā* and *vedanā* and *viññāṇa*: *Yaṃ hi ... vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vijānāti*, which is usually translated "whatever one feels, that one perceives; whatever one perceives, that one discriminates". But this comparison probably means that a sensation normally develops into a perception and that the perception is a process belonging to consciousness. Through its position between *vedanā* and *viññāṇa*, *saññā* becomes clearly defined as referring to visual perception. The fully developed perception would therefore be one of the special functions of *viññāṇa*; cf. M III 260, where *viññāṇa* is derived from *vedanā* (*cakkhusamphassajaṃ vedanānissitaṃ viññāṇaṃ*, "consciousness dependent on sensation born of visual contact"). In this case, then, *viññāṇa* follows after *vedanā*, and we obtain a reasonable time-sequence for the generation of a perception. Why is then the order different in the standard series? Even this can be defended from a modern psychological point of view. Perception is produced through the confrontation of a neural message with memories stored in the nervous system. The information supplied through the senses can be interpreted only by being compared with this stored information; this information can from a Buddhist point of view be envisaged as provided by *viññāṇa* and therefore present before the stimulus; it is activated only through the contact, *phassa*. *Viññāṇa* is, for this and other reasons, a precondition of perception and can therefore be placed earlier in the conditioned series. The *dimension*

of consciousness is the condition of sensation, and the concrete *content* is the result of it.

But more than visual perception is included in *saññā*. D II 309 enumerates "ideation of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and mental images" (*rūpa-saññā*, *sadda-*, *gandha-*, *rasa-*, *phoṭṭhabba-* and *dhamma-saññā*). Mental representations of all the sense-modalities are then called *saññā*. The last type is perhaps most important, since it refers to memories and imaginations, i.e. representations that are not called perceptions in English. They are the *dhammā*, "mental processes", produced by *mano*, "the inner sense".

To be conscious of a colour may mean at least two things: you may see, for instance, a blue object or you may, with closed eyes, imagine a blue colour (or, thirdly, you may think about "blueness" without actually being concretely aware of the colour itself). *Saññā* covers both the two first experiences; the English word "perception" covers only the first one, and "idea" would cover the second and third ones. In this book, we use "ideation" to cover the same area as *saññā*. They are both words for concrete experiences, either of something present and impinging upon you or something concretely imagined or remembered.

In order to elucidate the meaning further, let us quote some examples. A V 210 mentions three *samaṇasaññā*, "ideas of a monk": "I am now come to a state of being an outcast", "My life is dependent upon others", "I must now behave myself differently". "One idea (*saññā*) arose in me: 'The end of becoming is nibbāna'; another idea faded out in me: 'The end of becoming is nibbāna'" (A V 9). In A V 109 we find several examples of *saññā*, and we quote the following *anicca-saññā*, "ideas of impermanence": "Impermanent is form, impermanent is sensation, ideation, the activities, consciousness". These types of *saññā* are not perceptions and also not simple images. But the point probably is that these ideas should be concretely visualized and all the consequences fully understood. This concrete and clear visualization has been used extensively as a method for realizing Buddhist purposes. "The ideation of impermanence, if developed and expanded, wears out all desire

for enjoyment, all desire for form, all desire for becoming, all ignorance, all ego-pride" (*Aniccasaññā ... bhāvitā bahulīkatā sabbaṃ kāmarāgaṃ pariyādiyati sabbaṃ rūparāgaṃ pariyādiyati sabbaṃ bhavarāgaṃ pariyādiyati sabbaṃ avijjaṃ pariyādiyati, sabbaṃ asmimānaṃ pariyādiyati*, S III 155). A V 107 mentions a number of ideas that should be used to fortify the mind (*paricitaṃ no cittaṃ bhavissati*): the idea of impermanence, the idea of no soul, the idea of the foul, of danger, the idea of the straight and the crooked ways in the world, the idea of composition and decomposition, the idea of the origin and the end of the world, the ideas of abandoning, of fading interest, of stopping. As a result, evil, unprofitable states will not overpower the *citta*, and either the final knowledge will be attained in this life or the condition of not-returning will be achieved. If these ideas could be concretely and clearly produced and kept conscious, all other mental contents would fade and seem unreal. It would be something like applying a strong acid to a piece of metal until it is completely corroded.

When a monk "visualizes the image of light and establishes the image of day-light during day as well as night, during night as well as day, he in this way, with open and unmuffled mind, develops his mind to be luminous" (*bhikkhu āloka-saññaṃ manasikaroti, divā-saññaṃ adhiṭṭhāti yathā divā tathā rattiṃ, yathā rattiṃ tathā divā, iti vivaṭena cetasā apariyonaddhena sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ bhāveti*, D III 223). This is a method for attaining *ñāṇa-dassana*, "knowledge and insight". Knowledge is associated with vision and vision with light: this is probably the reason why it was felt that knowledge could be attained through an intense internal visualization of light. Visions of light are not uncommon during meditation and may be experienced as revelations of otherwise imperceptible facts. In this context I will also again refer to a passage in S V 283, mentioned in an earlier chapter, where it is said that the body may become lighter and rise up from the ground, if the ideas of happiness and lightness (*sukhasaññā, lahusaññā*) are strongly developed.

As a conscious phenomenon, *saññā* is *marīcikūpamā*, "like a mirage" (S III 142) but still of the same type of reality as the external world. This we understand from the passage just

quoted, but it also becomes evident from many other texts. There are gods that are *saññāmaya*, "made of ideation" (M I 410). All the levels of *samādhi* are called *saññā* except *saññāvedayita-nirodha*, "the cessation of ideation and feeling" (S IV 217). They are mental states but also conceived as real worlds, into which one enters during meditation and where one may be reborn (D III 263). In a discussion between Bhaddaji and Ānanda, the former said that the best type of *saññā* is the gods in the sphere of nothingness (*Atthi ... ākiñcaññāyatanūpagā devā, idaṃ saññānaṃ aggaṃ*, A III 202) - but Ānanda retorted that the best type of *saññā* is when the influxes are destroyed while one is conscious (*Yathā saññissa anantarā āsavānaṃ khayo hoti, idaṃ saññānaṃ aggaṃ*). It should be observed that Ānanda did not deny that there were gods in this sphere or that they were *saññā*, but only that they were the "best mental images".

The destruction of the influxes is a conscious process, involving understanding (*paññā*), and therefore *saññā*. So nibbāna is attained "while conscious" (*saññī*).

The arahant has still *saññā* as a personality dimension - just as the other factors - but is free from many types of mental contents, especially love, aggressiveness and harmfulness (*kāmasaññā, vyāpādasaññā, vihiṃsāsaññā*). In him no ideations give rise to desires but are constantly controlled: The Tathāgata's sensations, ideations and thoughts are observed while they last and observed when they go (M III 124).

## Perception as Distortion

The main purpose of the standard version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series is not to explain perception, although perception is one of the factors included, but we have, in the beginning of this chapter, quoted a special series presented as an explanation of "the origin of the world" (*lokassa samudayo*, S II 73, Fig. 1). If we accept the second interpretation offered in that context, namely that this series is an attempt to describe the perceptual process, we will arrive at an interesting multi-layered theory. The links of the series would correspond to factors influencing

the process. The main phases would be: (a) sensation with its feeling-tone, as described above, (b) craving, which means personal selection and distortion through adjustment to prevailing needs, (c) *upādāna* and the following links, which create a subjective superstructure of interpretation and evaluation. This process does not seem to be described in detail anywhere, although the Buddha did recognize that perceptions may be distorted; in A II 52 he mentions the four types of distorted perceptions produced by "those who perceive permanence in the impermanent, pleasure in suffering, a self in the impersonal and beauty in the repulsive" (*Anicce niccasaññino dukkhe ca sukhasaññino anattani ca attā ti asubhe subhasaññino*). Perhaps we can imagine a process of this type. I enter a shop intending to buy a loaf of bread. However, a certain cake catches my eye (*phassa*). It looks nice (*vedanā*), and I feel an impulse to buy it (*taṇhā*). I try to stick to my original intension, but my memory reminds me of similar cakes I have eaten before. Actually, my associations and my desire transform my perception. I no longer see the cake "as it really is" (this is the superstructure of *upādāna*). Or another example. I have made a mistake and a friend points it out (*phassa*). I feel hurt (*vedanā*) and anger arises within me (*taṇhā*). Because he has hurt one of my weak spots, I see hate in his friendly face and I suddenly think that he probably has been my enemy for a long time (*upādāna*). My feelings have again distorted my perceptions. Most of our perceptions are actually of this type, although usually not so dramatic. Things are seen through the lenses of our desires, prejudices and resentments and are transformed accordingly. A good deal of modern research has been devoted to these processes, partly by psychoanalytically oriented scholars, partly by experimentalists (some experimental studies of this type have been described by M.D. Vernon, 1966, p. 331 ff; see also Blake and Ramsey, 1951). These studies have shown to what extent perceptions are transformed by desires, fears, experiences, defence mechanisms and mood. Especially our self-perceptions are usually full of misconceptions and defence reactions.

The passage quoted from S II 73 could actually refer to

perceptual processes of these types. *Taṇhā*, "craving", means a subjective reaction to and subjective involvement in perceptual things, which leads to a construction of a distorted world, to false values and to suffering.

The most important link in the process is then *taṇhā*; this is beautifully brought out through the change in the formulation in S II 73: "craving depends on sensation; by the utter fading away and ceasing of craving, building ceases". The distorted world depending on desires is no longer built. According to the practical psychology of the Buddha, it is possible to achieve full control over this link. By controlling *taṇhā*, freedom is realized and perception becomes truly realistic. "He is not interested in forms. When he sees a form he is mindful. With detached mind he senses it, but he remains without clinging. When he sees the object and follows the sensation, he is reduced, not increased ..." (*Na so rajjati rūpesu; rūpaṃ disvā patissato; virattacitto vedeti, tañca nājjhosa tiṭṭhati. Yathāssa passato rūpaṃ, sevato cāpi vedanaṃ, khīyati no pacīyati* ..., S IV 74). This is a good description of the recommended state of mind. The disciple should receive the information offered by the senses and make use of it (*sevato vedanaṃ*) but not be seduced by them. As a result he "is not increased", i.e. there are no *upādāna*-processes, and no construction and further growth occurs. The method for achieving this is also indicated: mindfulness. When a monk meets a woman, his proper reaction is *adassana*, "not seeing" (D II 141); if she speaks to him, he should develop mindfulness (*sati*). The problem is then to keep perception pure, and this is probably what the Buddha wanted to stress, even if his statements sometimes seem much more radical: "The ending of the world is realized by the Tathāgata" (*lokanirodho Tathāgatassa sacchikato*, A II 23). "I will teach you a way to penetrate, comprehend, abandon the all ... The eye, the objects, visual consciousness, visual contact, the pleasant, unpleasant or neutral sensation that comes depending on visual contact - all this must be abandoned through superknowledge and full comprehension" (*Sabbam abhiññā pariññā pahānāya vo ... dhammaṃ desissāmi*, etc., S IV 16). "Where there is no eye, no objects, no visual consciousness, no things cognizable through

visual consciousness, there is no world and no manifestation of the world" (*Yattha ca kho ... natthi cakkhu natthi rūpā natthi cakkhuviññānam natthi cakkhuviññānaviññātabbā dhammā, natthi tattha loko vā lokapaññatti vā*, S IV 40). This same passage also says that when this state has been reached, there will also be no temptation (Māra), no suffering and no "being" (*satta*). This "destruction of the world" through restriction of the conscious activities was effected through *samādhi*: "A monk's achievement of concentration may be so complete that ... in this world he is unconscious of this world and in the world beyond he is unconscious of it, and yet at the same time he is conscious" (*Siyā ... bhikkhuno tathārūpo samādhipaṭilābho, yathā ... na idhaloke idhalokasaññī assa, na paraloke paralokasaññī assa, saññī ca pana assa*, A V 7).

The efforts to achieve freedom and the "end of the world" may therefore concentrate on different links in the dynamic series: on craving by means of mindfulness, on sensation by means of mindfulness and by a conscious analysis and deliberate re-evaluation, and on the senses by not using them or by *samādhi*. In cases when sense-information is felt to be important or cannot be avoided, mindfulness should always be used. "In the seen, there shall be just the seen" (*diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattam bhavissati*, S IV 73).

# CHAPTER 7

# MOTIVATION

According to most psychological theories, no behaviour can take place without special dynamic factors called motivation. This word is used to cover all the forces (more appropriately called needs) behind our acts. They are explained physiologically as states of homeostatic deficiencies, either in the different organs of the body or in the central nervous system. Hunger is, for instance, a lack of certain chemical compounds in cells; the organism reacts on this deficiency by means of perceptual and search activity. More subtle needs, for instance the need to listen to a certain piece of music, could also be explained by referring to physiological processes, but only through a long series of specialized learning and conditioning sequences.

When classifying the needs, it may be useful to make the following distinctions:

1. Needs may be primary and secondary. The former are often called instincts and are considered inborn patterns of reaction, like hunger, thirst, sexual needs, maternal behaviour. The secondary needs are learned and specialized, like the need to solve theoretical problems or the need to play cricket.

2. Needs belong to different areas of life. There are physiological needs, aimed to secure our physical existence. There are social needs which help us to cope with others, by pleasing them, helping them, or frightening and subduing them. There are personality needs, e.g. need of freedom, of self-assertion, of achievement, of humility, of exhibition, of submitting to leadership. There are intellectual needs: the need to understand, to solve problems. These distinctions can be developed into a system of values, the most well-known of which is the one published by Allport, Vernon and Lindzey (1951); they distinguish six types: theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political and religious values. To the personality needs we can also refer the defence mechanisms, i.e. certain reaction patterns developed in order to cope with frustrations.

The most well-known of these are rationalization, regression, projection, repression and sublimation (cf. Blake & Ramsey, 1951, p. 292 ff; Anna Freud, 1937, mentions ten types of defence mechanisms).

3. We can also distinguish between conscious and unconscious needs. Most needs are supposed to be conscious: when we are hungry we know that we are hungry; we have a mental image of the aim we want to attain and try to visualize the proper method. Hunger may produce an image of a good lunch, and this directs our steps home or to a restaurant. We play a game and visualize the next move. The aim can be more or less distant in time and more or less difficult to attain. If the need is long-range and subject to great obstacles, we use a special terminology. We speak about a decision and volition. We exert our will-power to master the difficulties, and in the pursuit we develop a certain character. But the difference is really one of degrees: behind the will-power there is always a need. There are also several types of more or less unconscious needs. The instincts may be reaction patterns without any conscious need. Behaviour that is repeated very frequently in exactly the same way, for instance going to work every morning and many types of highly automatic work procedures, may be performed without the need becoming conscious. Many personality needs and character traits involve behaviour which was intentional at the beginning but has become more and more automatic. A person trying to explain a mistake, for instance, is usually quite unconscious of the fact that he is rationalizing.

4. Finally, moral and developmental aspects can be applied to needs. Some needs may help to achieve a healthy and socially acceptable personal development, as for instance the need to adjust, to achieve, to help others, while other needs, like aggressive needs and the need to run away, may make social adjustment difficult. It is not fashionable among psychologists to speak about morality, but many of these issues cannot be avoided when speaking about social development and personality development.

## The Buddhist Terminology

According to Buddhist psychology, all psychological processes are dynamic, i.e. intentional and creative. The terminology referring to needs is particularly rich. Buddhist psychology is also practical, which means that all needs are evaluated with regard to the end achieved through them. Buddhism recognizes mainly three great goals: (a) better rebirth, (b) freedom from rebirth, (c) happiness in this life. (The Buddha says in A I 136: "I am one of those who live happily in the world", *Ye ca pana loke sukhaṃ senti ahaṃ tesaṃ aññataro ti*). The first two are of course not compatible, but the last one is compatible with both of the others. We have, therefore, a dual system of values, connected with three types of needs: (a) bad (*pāpaka, akusala*) needs, leading to none of the three ends, (b) good (*kusala*) needs, leading to better rebirth and at least some degree of happiness in this life, (c) freedom from needs, leading to freedom from rebirth and to perfect happiness in this life. The other types of distinctions, mentioned above, are not systematically made but in some cases implied.

Motives of behaviour are frequently enumerated in the texts. "Greed (hatred ..., illusion ..., not paying proper attention ..., a wrongly directed mind) is the cause of doing a bad action, of committing a bad action" (*Lobho ..., doso ..., moho ..., ayonisomanasikāro ..., micchāpaṇihitaṃ cittaṃ hetu ... pāpassa kammassa kiriyāya pāpassa kammassa pavattiyā*, A V 86 f). In a parallel passage, the opposites of these are given as motives of good actions: freedom from greed, freedom from hatred, freedom from illusion, proper attention, a rightly directed mind (*alobho, adoso, amoho, yonisomanasikāro, sammāpaṇihitaṃ cittaṃ*). In D III 182 we find the following motives of bad actions: ambition, hatred, fear and illusion (*chanda, dosa, bhaya, moha*), but most common of all such enumerations is the triad *rāga, dosa, moha*, "desire, hatred and illusion". The following factors help a monk to leave what is unskilful and develop skilfulness: faith, shame, remorse, energy and understanding (*Saddhañ ..., Hiriñ ..., Ottappañ ..., Viriyañ ..., Paññañ ce ... nissāya akusalaṃ pajahati kusalaṃ bhāveti,*

*pahīnaṃ ev'assa taṃ akusalaṃ hoti*, A IV 353). It is characteristic of all such enumerations of motives, that the distinction between cognitive, emotional and dynamic terms usually observed in Western psychology is absent: we would call illusion, understanding and perhaps also faith cognitive terms; fear, shame and remorse are to us emotional terms, and only greed, ambition, desire and energy would be considered as dynamic factors proper. In addition, terms are included which to us belong to the area of method: proper attention and a rightly directed mind. But this mixture is natural from a Buddhist point of view, since all personality factors are considered more or less dynamic. Even the cognitive factors are thought to have a force of their own. The tragic conflict between the powerful instincts and powerless knowledge is therefore unknown in Buddhism.

The main problem to the Buddha was the motives leading to bad actions and thoughts. To get rid of these was in his opinion in itself a motivation to good activities. "The monk who has become free from desire for sense-pleasures and has got rid of ambition, affection, thirst, distress and craving, inclines his mind to exertion, to application, to perseverance and to energetic effort" (*Yo so ... bhikkhu kāmesu vītarāgo hoti vigatacchando vigatapemo vigatapipāso vigatapariḷāho vigatataṇho, tassa cittaṃ namati ātappāya anuyogāya sātaccāya padhānāya*, A V 20). The background of this view can probably be sought in the Buddhist theory of the origin of motives, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The motivational factors are not inborn and inherited but secondary, conditioned by sense-perception. If these conditioned motives are got rid of, something like an original purity will appear ("This mind was luminous but was defiled by taints that came from the outside", *Pabhassaraṃ idaṃ ... cittaṃ tañ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ*, A I 10). This purity is in itself a good factor motivating to a favourable further development. Here we probably can look for one of the reasons why the negative terminology in this field usually has such a positive emotional value in the Buddhist literature.

We will now analyse and classify the terminology used in the field of motivation. Since the vocabulary is very rich,

only the most common terms will be discussed.

Early Buddhism was a practical method, not science or philosophy, and it is therefore natural that the only realistic classification turns out to be one concerned with the results of needs. There are terms that signify needs leading to (a) bad results, (b) good results, (c) either. The last group can then be used to indicate both desirable and undesirable ends. In addition to this classification we can make two more distinctions, one according to the degree of consciousness and one according to the degree of planning and deliberateness involved.

## Negative Terms

One of the most frequently mentioned motives leading to undesirable results is *taṇhā*, lit. "thirst", here rendered by "craving". It is the motivational term used in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series. It is, however, rarely said to motivate action, rather a sentiment of interest and dependence. "There are these six groups of craving: craving for forms, for sounds, for odours, for tastes, for contacts, for ideas" (*Chayime ... taṇhākāyā; rūpataṇhā saddataṇhā gandhataṇhā rasataṇhā phoṭṭhabbataṇhā dhammataṇhā*, S II 3). These are cravings for experiences and possessions. The same type of dependence is indicated by other enumerations of the objects of *taṇhā*. D III 216 has three series of three types: craving for love, growth and annihilation; craving for love, form and the formless; craving for form, the formless and cessation (*kāma, bhava, vibhava; kāma, rūpa, arūpa; rūpa, arūpa, nirodha*). These terms are not explained in the text, but they probably refer to different types of existence, now and in the future. *Kāma* is the world of sensuality, in which we are living now. *Rūpa* and *arūpa* are the form-world and the formless world in which a future rebirth is possible. Most interesting is *nirodha*, which refers to the cessation of everything that is negative, i.e. it is a word for nibbāna; this shows that even *taṇhā* can be a desirable motive. But usually "craving is the seamstress, for it sews a man just to this ever-becoming birth" (*taṇhā sibbanī: taṇhā hi naṃ sibbati tassa tas-*

*s'eva bhavassa abhinibbattiyā*, A III 402).

*Rāga* seems originally to have been an emotional word, meaning "excitement", "passion", since it literally means "colour", but it has become a general word for "desire". It usually occurs together with *dosa*, "hatred", and *moha*, "illusion". They are described as character traits (*pakati*): "somebody is endowed with strong desires in his character (the same is repeated for hatred and illusion); he experiences the perpetual suffering and dejection that are born of desire (hatred, illusion)" (*ekacco pakatiyā pi tibbarāgajātiko hoti abhikkhaṇaṃ rāgajaṃ dukkhaṃ domanassaṃ paṭisaṃvedeti*, A II 149). The results of these three forces are described in A I 216: "He who is overwhelmed by desire plans to his own harm, to the harm of others, to the harm of both. He performs immoral acts in deed, words and thought. He cannot understand, as it really is, his own profit, that of others, or that of both. Desire is the cause of blindness, of not seeing, of not knowing, of loss of understanding: it is associated with trouble and does not lead to nibbāna" (*Ratto ... rāgena ... attavyābādhāya pi ceteti para- ... pe ... ubhayavyābādhāya pi ceteti ...; ... kāyena duccaritaṃ carati, vācāya ... pe ... manasā duccaritaṃ carati; ... attatthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti paratthaṃ pi ... pe ... ubhayatthaṃ pi yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti. ... Rāgo kho ... andhakaraṇo acakkhukaraṇo aññāṇakaraṇo paññānirodhiko vighātapakkhiko anibbānasaṃvattaniko*). The same passage is repeated for *duṭṭho dosena*, "one corrupted by hatred", and *mūḷho mohena*, "one deceived by illusion". These motives then lead to wrong actions which hurt oneself and others; this seems to be the criterion of immorality. They also conduce to false values and inability to understand one's own situation and one's own good.

These three words are used almost exclusively to denote reprehensible motives, but they can also be found in more positive contexts. A V 343 describes a monk who has reached a certain level of development and can attain the first *jhāna* but cannot realize the destruction of the influxes; "but by his desire for the doctrine, by his delight in the doctrine, he bursts the five fetters binding him to this world and is reborn in a spiritual world" (*ten'eva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā*

*pañcannam orambhāgiyānam samyojanānam parikkhayā opapātiko hoti*). Desire for the doctrine will, therefore, lead to a good result. In A IV 236, *chanda*, *dosa*, *moha* and *bhaya* ("ambition, hatred, illusion and fear") are enumerated as motives for giving gifts to monks. This observation that bad motives sometimes can be used for good purposes betrays an interesting insight into the intricacies of human motivation.

Among the negative motives, *kāma* is one of those most frequently mentioned and also one of those most categorically condemned. The word occurs alone but also combined with *upādāna* and *āsava*. There is also a *kāmataṇhā* (A III 445) and a *kāmacchanda* (M II 203).

The etymological meaning of the word is "love" in its general, sensual signification, and "love" seems to be the translation that still fits most of the contexts.[1] In D III 181, *kāmesu micchācāro* is mentioned as one of four misconducts, and as it is paraphrased by *para-dāra-gamanaṃ*, "going to the wife of somebody else", we know that it belongs to the sexual sphere and means "misconduct in love". "Saying: 'happiness is contact with the young, soft and downy arms of this nun', these come to indulge in love-relations" (*sukho imissā paribbājikāya taruṇāya mudukāya lomasāya bāhāya samphasso ti te kāmesu pātabyataṃ āpajjanti*, M I 305). But it has a wider meaning also, and a passage from D III 133 seems to indicate that the sexual field was not the central association attached to the word. Here, certain types of practices are said to be impossible to an arahant, among them *methunaṃ dhammaṃ*, "sexual relations", and *sannidhi-kārakaṃ kāme paribhuñjituṃ*, "laying up treasure for indulgence in *kāma*". Here the word *kāma* is reserved for a more general enjoyment of the world and can be rendered by "worldly pleasures" or "sense-pleasures".

In A III 411, *kāma* is defined as *sankapparāga*, "intention and desire", and M III 233 gives the following definition: "Whatever pleasure and happiness arises depending on the five objects of love (what is seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched) is called the pleasure of love" (*Yaṃ kho ... ime pañca kāmaguṇe paṭicca uppajjati sukhasomanassaṃ, idaṃ vuccati kāmasukhaṃ*). Each one of these two definitions stresses one of

the two main aspects of the word, desire and pleasure, as they are combined also in the English word 'love'.

The objects of love are usually not called *kāma*: "*kāmaguṇā* are not *kāmā*" (A III 411) and: *N'ete kāmā yāni citrāni loke*, "What is beautiful in the world - this is not the passions" (and the text continues: "What is beautiful in the world remains so, but wise men drive out the striving after it"). But it happens that the objects may also be referred to as *kāma*, for instance in SN 769: fields, gold, horses, cows, servants, relatives, women.

*Kāma* is deeply involved in the generation of *kamma*: "By loving one produces an individuality according to merit and demerit. This is called the ripening of love-attachments" (*Yam kho ... kāmayamāno tajjaṃ tajjaṃ attabhāvaṃ abhinibbatteti puññabhāgiyaṃ vā apuññabhāgiyaṃ vā. Ayaṃ vuccati ... kāmānaṃ vipāko*, A III 411).

The Buddhist attitude to *kāma* is strongly negative: "*Kāmā* are likened by the Master to a skeleton, of much pain ... to a torch of dry grass ... a pit of glowing embers ... a slaughter house ... a snake's head" (M I 130). The word is very rarely found in positive contexts: "A man loving the good, loving the beneficial, loving security from bonds - this is a synonym for a Tathāgata" (*Puriso atthakāmo hitakāmo yogakkhemakāmo ti kho ... tathāgatass' etaṃ adhivacanaṃ*, M I 118).

We have seen that it is difficult to find a translation of *kāma* that can be used in all contexts. The central meaning can probably be described in this way: an extroverted feeling and attachment, dependence on external things, a pleasure attitude, sensuality, a passion for life; one feels tempted to use the psychoanalytical phrases, "the pleasure principle"[2] and "libido investment" as covering the central meaning. It is mainly an emotion but also a strong motive, for pleasure-seeking activities, for building a pleasure-loving personality (*kāmupādāna*), for creating a *kāma*-world (*kāma-bhava*) and prolonging, renewing existence in this world of sensuality.

The motives discussed so far are described as fully conscious. When we come to *anusaya*, the level of consciousness is doubtful. The word means literally, "lying down with", since

it can be derived from the verb *anusayati*, "lie down with". It is usually translated as "tendency" or "disposition", and this seems to indicate that this factor operates on a deeper, less conscious, level.

Seven types of *anusaya* are frequently mentioned (e.g. S V 60):

> *kāmarāgānusaya*, "tendency to desire pleasure"
> *paṭighānusaya*, "tendency to anger or disgust"
> *diṭṭhānusaya*, "tendency to speculation"
> *vicikicchānusaya*, "tendency to doubt"
> *mānānusaya*, "tendency to conceit"
> *bhavarāgānusaya*, "tendency to desire growth"
> *avijjānusaya*, "tendency to ignorance".

In addition to these, some others are mentioned: *ahankāra-mamankāra-mānānusaya* (e.g. S II 275), "tendency to pride that produces 'I' and 'mine'", *sakkāya-diṭṭhānusaya*, "tendency to form a theory about an individuality", *sīlabbataparāmāsānusaya*, "tendency to cling to duties and rituals", *byāpādānusaya*, "tendency to aggressiveness" (M I 433).

All these terms refer to undesirable traits and with one exception they seem to belong to the area of consciousness, rather than behaviour. As in other similar enumerations, no distinction is made between different functions of consciousness: *kāmarāga*, *bhavarāga* and *byāpāda* seem to belong to the area of motivation proper, *paṭigha* and *māna* are emotional terms, *diṭṭhi*, *sakkāya-diṭṭhi* and *avijjā* are cognitive terms, *sīlabbataparāmāsa* may refer to a type of behaviour or attitude, and the rest to combinations of the areas. There are few indications in the texts what types of activity are produced by the *anusaya*. It is, for instance, said in S II 275 that "the tendencies to pride that produces 'I' and 'mine' have been rooted out from the venerable Sāriputta; therefore a deterioration and change even in the Teacher (i.e. the Buddha) would not give rise to grief, lament, suffering, sorrow and despair". The presence of *anusaya* would, then, in this case produce emotional attachment. S II 65 says that "what one plans, intends and has a tendency to, that becomes a basis for the establishment of consciousness" (*yañca kho ... ceteti yañca*

*pakappeti yañca anuseti, ārammaṇam etaṃ hoti viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā*); later the text corrects this and says that a tendency (*anuseti*) is enough as a basis for the establishment of consciousness. From these passages we can conclude that *anusaya* will produce activity, at least in the form of conscious activity. We can also see that *anuseti* (the verbal equivalent to *anusaya*) was considered as something less obvious and less important from a kammical point of view than the conscious and purposive intentions behind *ceteti* and *pakappeti*. The text corrects this and says that the tendencies are enough to direct *viññāṇa* in the process of rebirth. *Anusaya* is then kammically active and is also able to produce activity with kammical consequences.

It has been suggested, e.g. by Jayasuriya (1963, p. 108) and by Padmasiri de Silva (1973, p. 61) that the *anusayā* correspond to the psychoanalytic concept of the unconscious. Whether this is realistic or not is difficult to decide on the basis of the Nikāya texts. The Freudian unconscious consists of (a) a few basic and inherited drives or instincts, (b) a great amount of "repressed" or "forgotten" experiences, which have been conscious but have been repressed and cannot reach consciousness again because of a "censor", the watchdog of the ego. Both groups, however, can influence consciousness and behaviour without themselves becoming conscious. We have seen that the *anusayā* mainly work through consciousness, but there is usually no hint that they themselves remain unconscious while exerting this influence. Our quotation from S II 65 shows that *anusaya* may influence *viññāṇa*, "consciousness", in the process of rebirth and is then kammically active, but it is not said whether this influence can take place without the person's own knowing. Another relevant passage can be found in M I 432 f: "A small, ignorant boy lying on his back has no idea of 'individuality': so how could a theory about individuality arise in him? But a disposition to form a theory about individuality is latent in him. He is not conscious of 'ideas': so how could doubt about ideas arise in him? But a disposition to doubt is latent in him. He has no idea of 'duties': so how could clinging to duties and rituals arise in him? But a dis-

position to cling to duties and rituals is latent in him. He has no idea of sense-pleasures: so how could a wish for pleasures arise in him? But a disposition to desire pleasures is latent in him. He has no idea of 'persons': so how could aggressiveness towards persons arise in him? But a disposition to aggressiveness is latent in him" (*Daharassa ... kumārassa mandassa uttānaseyyakassa sakkāyo ti pi na hoti, kuto pan'assa uppajjissati sakkāyadiṭṭhi; anuseti tv-ev'assa sakkāyadiṭṭhānusayo; ... dhammā ti pi na hoti, kuto pan'assa uppajjissati dhammesu vicikicchā; anuseti tv-ev'assa vicikicchānusayo; ... sīlā ti pi na hoti, kuto pan'assa uppajjissati sīlesu sīlabbataparāmāso; anuseti tv-ev'assa sīlabbataparāmāsānusayo; ... kāmā ti pi na hoti, kuto pan'assa uppajjissati kāmesu kāmacchando; anuseti tv-ev'assa kāmarāgānusayo; ... sattā ti pi na hoti, kuto pan'assa uppajjissati sattesu byāpādo; anuseti tv-ev'assa byāpādānusayo*). The meaning seems to be that the child's ability to perceive and be conscious is limited. He has no clear idea of himself as a separate entity, so how could he be an egoist? If he cannot distinguish between several alternatives, how can he perceive a conflict, how can he doubt? If he does not know that he *should* do anything, how could he feel that duties and rituals are important? As he does not know about pleasing objects, he cannot feel desire for them. He does not know about other people, so he cannot feel aggressive towards them. A baby is innocent: he has no bad intentions and so cannot perform bad actions (this becomes clear from a passage in M II 24 which will be quoted later in this chapter). But he has, as we see in the quoted text, *anusayā*. This must mean that he has latent dispositions which are dormant and inactive and will be activated only later. This text proves that the *anusayā* may be dormant and unconscious but not that they can be active and influence activity in this state. Taken together with the passage quoted from S II 65, we would get the impression that *anusayā* could unconsciously influence *viññāṇa* kammically, in the process of rebirth (but it is not this type of influence that interests the psychoanalysts). One more text would seem relevant: In S III 131, the venerable Khemaka tells the simile of a dirty piece of cloth that has

been sent to the washerman. He rubs it smooth with salt-earth, or potash or cowdung, and rinses it in pure clean water. But although it is now clean, there hangs about it the smell of salt-earth or potash or cowdung. But the owners put it in a sweet-scented coffer, and this smell soon disappears. In the same way, "though a disciple of the noble one has put away the five lower fetters, yet there remains in his five personality factors a subtle remnant of the 'I am'-conceit, of the 'I am'-ambition, of the 'I am'-disposition, still not removed from him" (*Evam eva kho ... kiñcāpi ariyasāvakassa pañcorambhāgiyāni saññojanāni pahīnāni bhavanti; atha khvassa hoti yo ca pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu anusahagato Asmīti māno Asmīti chando Asmīti anusayo asamūhato*). This passage shows that *anusaya* may refer to a more subtle, less noticeable tendency to think in ego-terms. But in what ways will the tendencies affect our conscious life without our knowledge? Not at all? In that case, there would be no similarity to the Freudian unconscious. Or in the form of defence mechanisms, dreams, errors, slips of the tongue? In that case there would be a similarity. The Buddha did not specify. Anyway, he had no theory about the influence of repressed drives and forgotten memories on our conscious life.

Summing up the evidence, it seems preferable to use the translations "tendency" and "disposition", by which we mean a personality trait that is not always showing but is present and may become operative, when the child has matured or other conditions become favourable. When active, the tendencies usually operate by becoming conscious. In order to perform a bad action, a conscious intention is needed, because only the intention is wrong and kammically active.

## Positive Terms

Motives to good actions are, as mentioned above, frequently expressed as negations: "There are these three roots of skill: absence of greed, absence of hatred, absence of illusion" (*Tīṇ' imāni ... kusalamūlāni ...: alobho kusalamūlaṃ, adoso kusala-*

*mūlam, amoho kusalamūlam*, A I 203). But their positive equivalents are also frequently used: *cāga*, which means "renunciation" but also "generosity", *mettā*, "friendliness", and *paññā*, "understanding": "friendliness must be developed for the eradication of hatred, understanding must be developed for the eradication of illusion" (*dosassa pahānāya mettā bhāvetabbā, mohassa pahānāya paññā bhāvetabbā*, A III 446). *Paññā* is usually not described as a force, but rather as an intellectual tool for understanding. But intelligence may very well be exposing, revealing and destructive, and therefore have a dynamic component. This side of the intellectual function is sometimes stressed and made use of. In M I 114 f, the Buddha recalls that during the time before his enlightenment, thoughts about love (*kāmavitakka*) could arise in him: "But while I was reflecting, 'It will harm myself', it subsided" (*Attabyābādhāya saṃvattatīti pi me ... paṭisañcikkhato abbhatthaṃ gacchati*). A V 150 f mentions ten ways of getting rid of anger. They all consist of suitable thoughts, for instance: "He has done me harm, what was the reason?" (*Anatthaṃ me acari, taṃ kut' ettha labbhā'ti*; the translation of the last phrase is doubtful; I have preferred to imply intellectual analysis of the situation, which is recognized as a realistic method of resolving an emotional conflict). *Paññā* is not mentioned in these two passages, but both are concerned with the dynamic component in intellectual activity.

We have already quoted a number of positive motives from A IV 353: *saddhā*, "faith", *hiri*, "shame", *ottappa*, "remorse" or "conscience", *viriya*, "energy", "will-power". Of these, *viriya* is perhaps the most interesting. In A IV 363, the power (*bala*) of energy is defined: "Such conditions as are unskilful and known to be such - to rid himself of such he generates an ambition, he struggles, he activates energy, he concentrates and exerts his mind". And he tries in the same way to pursue aims that are skilful. (*Ye dhammā akusalā akusalasankhātā ...: tesaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya chandaṃ janeti vāyamati viriyaṃ ārabhati cittaṃ paggaṇhāti padahati*.) This is a description of a very strong, conscious and concentrated act of will. We get the same impression from a passage earlier quoted from D II 99:

"The Master warded off that illness by will-power".

The mental act requiring the highest degree of planning, consciousness and deliberate effort is in English called decision, in Pali *vāyāma*. In D II 312 it is defined with exactly the same formulation as *viriya* in A IV 363, just quoted, (as is also *padhāna*, "effort", in D III 221). *Sammā-vāyāma*, "right decision", is the sixth part of the Eightfold Way. *Vāyāma* is mainly used in a positive sense, but the texts also speak about a *micchā-vāyāma*, "wrong decision".

## Neutral Terms

There are a number of neutral words in the field of motivation, i.e. words that can be used both for ethical and unethical motives. We have already seen that a number of typically negative words occasionally can be used in a positive sense - and vice versa, as is the case with *vāyāma*.

Like *vāyāma*, *sankappa*, "intention", is included in the Eightfold Path but has a wider use. It signifies the conscious, deliberate purpose to do something. Through *sankappa* one can pursue good values (*sammāsankappa*) or false values (*micchāsankappa*). Three types of false intentions are usually distinguished: *kāmasankappa*, *vyāpādasankappa* and *vihiṃsāsankappa*, "the intentions to love, to attack and to harm" (M III 73). Their opposites, the intention to renunciate, not to attack, not to harm (*nekkhammasankappa*, *avyāpādasankappa*, *avihiṃsāsankappa*) are the good intentions. They all give rise to merit (*puññabhāgiya*) but are still connected with influxes (*sāsava*). A different type of *sammāsankappa* was more valued among the Buddha's disciples, namely the intention to become free from the influxes and follow the Way (*sammāsankappo ariyo anāsavo ... maggango*).

A common word for "volition" or "will" is *cetanā* or *sañcetanā*. In S II 99 the different types of *āhārā*, "foods", i.e. "bases", "causes", are discussed. "The food of mental volition" (*manosañcetanāhāra*) is said to be like the mental state of a man being dragged by force towards "a pit of charcoal, deeper

than a man is high, filled with clear, glowing, smokeless charcoal": The will (*cetanā*) of that man would be to be far from that pit. That the results of volition can be both pleasant and unpleasant can be seen from A II 157 f: "Where there is body, there arises within oneself pleasure and pain because of the will to bodily action" (*Kāye ... sati kāyasañcetanāhetu uppajjati ajjhattaṃ sukhadukkhaṃ*).

Another important word, current in both positive and negative contexts is *chanda*, "wish", "ambition", which has occurred frequently in texts quoted already. "Evil deeds are done from motives of ambition, hatred, illusion and fear" (*Chandāgatiṃ gacchanto pāpakammaṃ karoti, dosāgatiṃ ..., mohāgatiṃ ..., bhayāgatiṃ gacchanto pāpakammaṃ karoti*, D III 182). One can also strive to become an arahant; "but when arahantship is attained, that ambition is calmed" (*tassa yo pubbe chando ahosi arahattapattiyā arahatte patte yo tajjo chando so paṭippassaddho*, S V 273).

The word *icchā* for "wish" is also neutral. "By wishing the world is bound; by removing wish it is liberated" (*Icchāya bajjhati loko, icchāvinayāya muccati*, S I 40). The destruction of the influxes is effected by knowing and seeing ... But if there should arise this wish in a monk who lives neglectful of self-training: 'O that my mind were freed from the influxes without grasping' - that would not lead to freedom (*Bhāvanānuyogam ananuyuttassa ... bhikkhuno viharato kiñcāpi evam icchā uppajjeyya Aho vata me anupādāya āsavehi cittaṃ vimucceyyāti; atha khvassa neva anupādāya āsavehi cittaṃ vimuccati*, S III 152 f). In the second quotation, *icchā* refers to the wish to attain nibbāna, and it is stressed that a mere wish is not sufficient for attaining this goal.

Habits may become invested with a dynamic component that will influence behaviour. A IV 236 mentions a number of motives for giving gifts to monks; we have quoted some of these above, but one of those not quoted is family traditions: "one gives thinking: 'That was previously given and done by my ancestors. I am not the man to let the ancient family tradition fall into disuse'" (*dinnapubbam katapubbam pitupitāmahehi, na arahāmi porāṇaṃ kulavaṃsaṃ hāpetuṃ ti dānaṃ deti*). Cf. also M I 115:

"Whatever a monk thinks and reflects on much, to that his mind will be inclined" (*Yañ-ñad eva ... bhikkhu bahulam anuvitakketi anuvicāreti tathā tathā nati hoti cetaso*). This means that thought habits tend to continue without change: if somebody is used to think much about *kāma*, then he will go on thinking about *kāma* and avoid thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma*).

## The Origin of Motivation

There are a few references in the texts to the development of motivation during childhood. A V 203 f implies that at first the senses are undeveloped and therefore there are no needs directed towards the five *kāmaguṇā*, "love-objects". But when the child has grown older and his senses have ripened (*indriyānaṃ paripākam anvāya*), then he devotes himself to them: "to objects cognizable through the eye (and other sensations), objects desirable, agreeable, fascinating, dear, loveable, attractive (*cakkhuviññeyyehi rūpehi iṭṭhehi kantehi manāpehi piyarūpehi kāmūpasaṃhitehi rajanīyehi*). Objects are, then, desired only when their desirability is perceived. As the perceptual ability grows, the temptation becomes greater, but without perception no desires would arise. The child also can do nothing evil, say nothing bad, have no bad intentions, have no wrong means of living; for what makes an act bad is the conscious purpose behind it. And the child is not conscious of what he is doing. "A small, ignorant boy lying on his back has no idea of 'body': so how could he do an evil act with his body, except for a little kicking about? He has no idea of 'saying': so how could he say something bad, except for a little crying? He has no idea of 'intention': so how could he feel an evil intention, except for a little irritation? He has no idea of his own support: so how could he support himself by wrong means, except for taking his mother's milk?" (*Daharassa ... kumārassa mandassa uttānaseyyakassa kāyo ti pi na hoti; kuto pana kāyena pāpakaṃ kammaṃ karissati, aññatra phanditamattā; ... vācā ti pi na hoti; kuto pana pāpikaṃ vācaṃ bhāsissati, aññatra roditamattā; ... saṅkappo ti pi na hoti; kuto pana*

*pāpakaṃ sankappaṃ sankappissati, aññatra vikujjitamattā; ... ājīvo ti pi na hoti; kuto pana pāpakaṃ ājīvaṃ ājīvissati, aññatra mātutthaññā*, M II 24).

Most of the motivational factors are in this way described as depending on perception. In the standard form of *paṭiccasamuppāda, taṇhā*, "craving", is derived from *vedanā*, "sensation". An example is given in A II 10, where it is said that cravings may arise in a monk because of robes, alms-food, lodging, success or failure (*itibhavābhavahetu*), i.e. external conditions which are perceived and appreciated. The reasons for the arising of desire, hatred and illusion are described in A I 200: desire is derived from *subhanimitta*, "the quality of beauty", i.e. a quality in things as perceived. Hatred is derived from *paṭighanimitta*, "the disgusting quality" in perceptions. Illusion, finally, is said to be conditioned by *ayoniso manasikāra*, "improper attention". They all have their root in perception.

As we have seen, a child can have no bad intentions, perform no bad actions and also have no sense desires, since his perceptions are undeveloped and he has little experience. Still he has dispositions (*anusaya*) to speculation, to doubt, to ritualism, to desire for pleasure, to aggressiveness, as is stated in M I 432 f, quoted above. What is then the origin of these traits? Very little information can be gleaned from the Nikāya literature, but let us study a passage in M III 285. "Visual consciousness arises because of eye and forms, and the meeting of the three is contact; conditioned by contact, a pleasant or painful or neutral sensation will arise. Stimulated by a pleasant sensation, he will be pleased, welcome it and remain attached to it; a disposition to desire is in him" (*Cakkhuñ ca ... paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso; phassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā. So sukhāya vedanāya phuṭṭho samāno abhinandati abhivadati ajjhosāya tiṭṭhati; tassa rāgānusayo anuseti*). But if the sensation is unpleasant, he will grieve, mourn, lament, beat his breast and fall into disillusion; a disposition to repugnance is in him. If the sensation is neutral, he will not correctly understand the origin and disappearance of that sensation, nor the satisfaction or peril involved, nor the

escape from it; a disposition to ignorance (i.e. not noticing or not understanding) is in him. We have here a series of conditionings as illustrated in Fig. 2. We find, first, the perceptual process, building on a contact between object, eye and visual consciousness; the resulting sensation may be pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. As a result, the perceiver may either be pleased, or unhappy, or unable to understand the nature of the sensation. This means that a motivational factor is released - or a failure to react because of incomprehension. The introduction of a disposition here should probably not be understood as a new factor conditioned by the emotional reaction (or the lack of it) but rather as an explanation. Desire is produced because a disposition to it is activated. Repugnance is released by an unpleasant sensation because a disposition to it was latent within and is now released. The meaning and consequences of a neutral sensation will not be understood because the latent tendency to ignorance has been activated. It seems that the interpretation of Piyadassi Thera (1964, p. 209) is correct when he writes: "objects act as stimulants, and no sooner are the latent tendencies thus stimulated than they rise to the surface". The dispositions are then inherent in the human nature, and Padmasiri de Silva (1973, p. 59) may be right when he says that the dispositions are inborn traits, produced by the *kamma* of previous lives.

The quoted passage seems to contribute a little to our understanding of the perceptual process. We will find all the three elements in any complicated perception, for instance when walking in a tropical forest. Some objects we detect quite easily, like fruits: they give rise to pleasant feelings and a desire to collect them; the Buddhist explanation is that we have *rāgānusaya*.Other objects, like snakes and some insects, are also easily detected, since we know them as dangerous and are looking out for them; this means that we have *paṭighānusaya*. But most of the objects in the forest are seen only at haphazard and vaguely or not at all. They remain more or less unconscious and they mean nothing to us: most of the trees and their leaves, stones, etc. This is how *avijjānusaya* functions.

The quoted series is valid for the ordinary man, but there

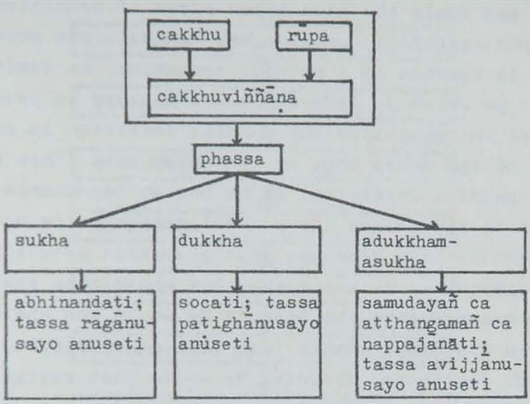



Fig. 2. How the dispositions work.

is also a corresponding series describing how the arahant reacts: "Visual consciousness arises because of eye and forms, and the meeting of the three is contact; conditioned by contact, a pleasant or painful or neutral sensation will arise. Stimulated by a pleasant sensation, he will not be pleased, he will not welcome it and will not remain attached to it; no disposition to desire is in him" (*tassa rāgānusayo nānuseti*), etc. In a similar passage, S IV 208 f, it is said that the disciple of the noble one feels the same three types of sensation as ordinary people: pleasant, painful and neutral. But when an ordinary man is touched by a painful sensation, he feels repugnance for it: *yo dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo so anuseti*, "a disposition to repugnance for painful sensation is in him". The disciple of the noble one, on the other hand, "has no repugnance for painful sensation; as he has no repugnance for it, a disposition to repugnance for painful sensation is not in him" (*tam enam dukkhāya vedanāya apaṭighavantaṃ yo dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo so nānuseti*). How would then the disciple of the noble one perceive the forest? He would see the good fruits and the dangerous snakes just like other people, but he would not feel desire and disgust. He would just register the facts: "a good fruit", "a dangerous snake" and react appropriately but without interest. Since he is practicing mindfulness, he will distribute his perceptions more evenly within his chosen perceptual field - which may be wide or very narrow - and he will become fully conscious also of impressions that usually never are perceived. He has no *anusaya* and is therefore not partial: he will try to study and understand how all perceived things arise and disappear.

M II 173 describes the normal way of becoming a Buddhist disciple. It takes the form of a long series of conditionings which can be formalized as shown in Fig. 3. The general progress seems to be this. First comes faith which motivates a theoretical acquaintance with the doctrine. From this, an ambition (*chanda*) to application is born. So follow the exercises required for personal insight and realization, and this is finally achieved through *paññā*, "understanding". *Chanda* is then a transitory stage on the way to arahantship; this is also pointed

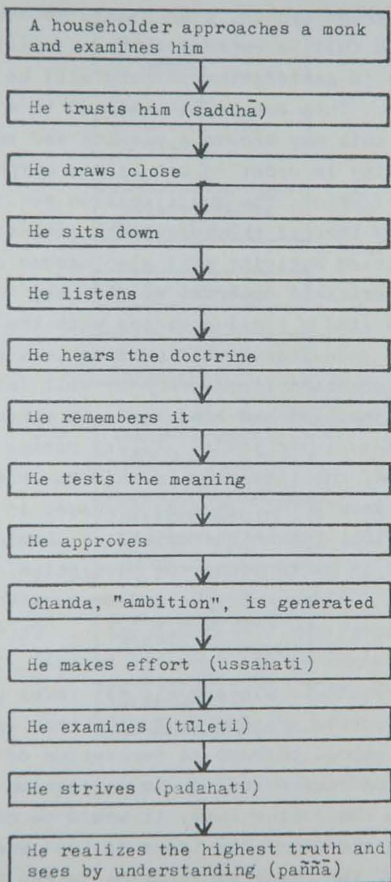



Fig. 3. The development of a Buddhist disciple.

out in S V 273: "that ambition which he had previously to attain arahantship has now subsided when arahantship is attained".

*Chanda* also occurs, together with *sankappa*, "intention", in another series of conditionings with a very different purpose (D III 289, see Fig. 4). The series starts from *dhātu* which refers to the elements from which the world is built up; these are sensed through *vedanā*, when *phassa* occurs; the sensations give rise to full perceptual images (*saññā*). If the perceived situation is satisfactory, there will be a conscious intention (*sankappa*). This can be intensified to a need or ambition (*chanda*); this may become a passion and so stimulate the person to activity in order to attain his purpose. Finally, the purpose is won (*lābha*). The qualification *nānatta*, "variation", may mean only that if the perceptual situation is complicated, the resulting activity will also become complicated; if there are many desirable objects, we will try to obtain them all. In S II 151 we find a similar series with the qualification *kāma*: a love-object (*kāmadhātu*) will produce love-perception (*kāmasaññā*); love-intention (*kāmasankappa*) will follow, and this may become intensified and lead to wrong conduct in deed, word and thought (*micchā-paṭipajjati kāyena vācāya manasā*).

In these series, the intention is said to originate from *saññā*, "images", "ideas". This is also stressed in M II 27: "How do these unskilful intentions arise? It should be answered that their origination is in ideas (or perception). Which ideas? For ideas are many ...: ideas of love, of aggression, of harming" (*Ime ca ... akusalasankappā kiṃsamuṭṭhānā? ... Saññāsamuṭṭhānā ti'ssa vacanīyaṃ. Katamā saññā? Saññā pi hi bahu ...: kāmasaññā byāpādasaññā vihiṃsāsaññā*). Since *saññā* may refer both to perceptual and to subjective images, we do not know exactly how this is to be understood: perhaps as perception of love or aggressiveness directed towards us, or as subjective ideas of love etc. Since, in the latter case, it would be difficult to distinguish between the cognitive image of love and the intention attached to it, the first explanation is the easiest to understand. It is a well-known fact that perception of loving behaviour tends to produce a response of love and that perception of aggressiveness will provoke an aggressive response.

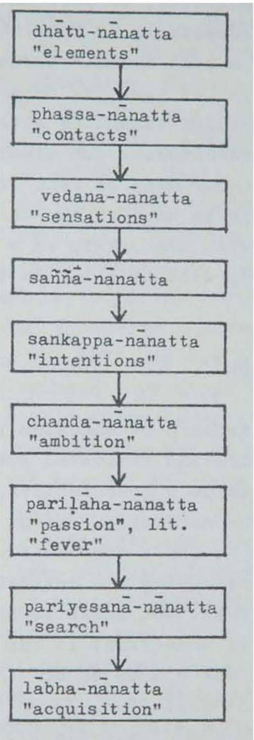



Fig. 4. The generation and satisfaction of needs.

We can conclude that our natural way of reacting to perception and images is to feel desire or aversion. Without a cognitive basis, no motives could arise. We have dispositions for these types of reaction even before we can understand the world and are able to perform more than very elementary actions. But when mature, these motivational factors are the causes of all types of activity, of personality building and of rebirth. Sometimes, especially in rebirth contexts, it is stressed that desire is a real force, strong enough to realize its own purpose (*taṇhā janeti purisaṃ*, "craving produces the man", S I 37). But everything cannot be attained by wishing alone, especially not arahantship. But since the motives are secondary products, just our ways of reacting, we can manage to control them. How this is done is the chief problem of Buddhism, not to be dealt with adequately in a small book like this. But a short summary will be given in the next section.

## How to Control Motivation

Because of the double standard of Buddhism referred to above, the attitude to motivation and motivated activities is ambivalent. Good activity leads to a good rebirth; but it is preferable not to be reborn. The motivating forces should therefore be controlled according to one's own ambitions. Nobody is free from the problem of transforming his motivation, if he is to make any amount of progress. But there is no doubt that it can be done: "Abandon what is unskilled! It can be done. If it were impossible, I would not ask you to do so" (*Akusalaṃ ... pajahatha. Sakkā ... akusalaṃ pajahituṃ. No ce taṃ ... sakkā abhavissa ... nāhaṃ evaṃ vadeyyaṃ 'akusalaṃ ... pajahathā'ti*, A I 58). But there is no contradiction between the two standards. The ethical ideal is common for both the arahants and lay followers, and the difference in this respect is that the former must be quite impeccable (A IV 370 f, A I 211). This implies a perfect control over the motives: "The Master has eye. The Master sees form with the eye. But the Master has no ambition and desire. The Master has a well-liberated mind" (*Saṃvijjati*

*kho ... Bhagavato cakkhu. Passati Bhagavā cakkhunā rūpam. Chandarāgo Bhagavato natthi. Suvimuttacitto Bhagavā*, S IV 164). But "he has passed beyond both good and bad as fetters" (*puññam ca pāpam ca ubho sangam upaccagā*, Dh 412). "For the arahant there is nothing more to be done and no accumulation of what is done" (*Natthi ... arahato uttarikaranīyam katassa vā paticcayo*, S III 168). For him "there is no need to strive earnestly in respect of the six dimensions of contact" (... *chasu phassāyatanesu nāppamādena karanīyam*, S IV 125). He is "free from desire for pleasure, from ambition, affection, thirst, distress and craving" (*kāme vītarāgo hoti vigatachando vigatapemo vigatapipāso vigatapariḷāho vigatatanho*, M I 103) and is therefore said to be like a dried-up tree (S IV 161). Still, "purposeful activity" (*sankheyyakāro*, SN 351) is said to be one of his characteristics and he "loves the good" (M I 118). Moreover, he is living in a state of emptiness: his consciousness is neutralized (*viññānam uparujjhati*, SN 1111) and he is "deep, immeasurable and unfathomable as the great ocean" (*gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāho seyyathā pi mahāsamuddo*, M I 487). He has no ego and is identified with nothing: "the brāhmin says thus: 'I am nothing of anything anywhere and in this there is nothing of anything anywhere that is mine' ... He goes the way of nothingness" (*brāhmano evam āha: nāham kvaci kassaci kiñcanam tasmim na ca mama kvaci katthaci kiñcanam n'atthīti ...; ... ākiñcaññam yeva patipadam patipanno hoti*, A II 177). In this state he is completely calm, happy and free and cannot be born again. But the texts do not seem to be in perfect agreement. On the whole he should be "a man of emptiness", i.e. quite free from motivation, for good activity as well as for bad activity. But he should be perfect from a moral point of view, although it is not his task to walk around and do good. He is more detached than engaged, and his perfection is passive and mechanical. Still we have quoted hints that he has feelings and purposes. He has *mettā*, "friendliness", and *karunā*, "compassion" (but nothing like Christian love).

In any case, there are two levels of ambition: they do not contradict each other since the second can be seen as a further development of the first, but they require different methods:

1. The first task is to curb all undesirable, "unskilful" motives. This can be done by

(a) removing the cognitive basis of the desires, for instance avoid looking at tempting objects,

(b) keeping cognitive processes pure by means of mindfulness (just as a gate-keeper guards the gate of a citadel, A IV 110 f),

(c) actively cultivating the opposite motive; for instance by developing *mettā*, "friendliness", *karuṇā*, "compassion", and *upekkhā*, "equanimity", as remedy for *āghāta*, "malice" (A III 185),

(d) unmindfulness, inattention (*asati*, *amanasikāra*, A III 186): one trains the mind to ignore all thoughts and images connected with the unwanted motive,

(e) intellectual analysis and insight; for instance one analyses the consequences of immoral habits (D III 236); one takes a close, introspective look at one's own character, just like somebody looking at his own image in a mirror (A V 92); one ponders the fact that one's activity is one's character and one's future (A III 186),

(f) observing unskilful behaviour in others and its results and deciding to be different (M I 97),

(g) developing the idea of impermanence (*aniccasaññā*): this will dissolve sensual desire, desire for form, desire for growth, ignorance and ego-pride (*kāmarāga*, *rūparāga*, *bhavarāga*, *avijjā*, *asmimāna*, S III 155),

(h) activating and concentrating will-power (*viriya*, A IV 363) in order to drive out bad tendencies.

2. The second task is to achieve the perfection, calm and emptiness required for arahantship. For this purpose the full range of meditative methods is used, especially

(a) *Sati*, "mindfulness", as 1 b. In an arahant this must be a continuous habit: "in the seen there must be only the seen", etc.

(b) *Samādhi*, "concentration", in which all motives and all activities are temporarily suspended, and a suitable state of mind for final insight and freedom from influxes is created.

In addition, understanding (*paññā*) must be cultivated for full understanding of one's own nature - a sort of intellectual katharsis (see further the last chapter of this book).

# CHAPTER 8

# PERSONALITY

In Western psychology, the word personality is mainly used as referring to the organization of individual traits, and to the dimensions used in order to describe an individual person and distinguish him from other persons. For our purposes we must first deal with the general and basic question: what are the dimensions of personality?

From the Western point of view the answer cannot be quite clear-cut. But these are the factors most generally mentioned: There is, first, the body. Psychology is mainly concerned with the sense organs and the nervous system. Then, there is the mind, i.e. the conscious processes. But since these are difficult to study objectively, it has become the fashion in Western psychology to avoid them and study only the corresponding behaviour. There are an undefined number of psychological variables; let us enumerate the most important ones: perception (and attention) which gives us information about ourselves and the world around us, feelings through which we evaluate the information, motivational factors which are the forces behind all our activities, memory through which we store and reproduce some of the information we receive, and thinking and imagination, which are creative mental functions. Sometimes will or volition is distinguished as a special variable, but it is generally analysed as a combination of needs and cognitive factors and therefore not a separate factor.

## Personality Factors

Early Buddhism has analysed human personality into five factors, the well-known *pañc'upādānakkhandhā*, literally "collection piles". They are the following five:

a) *rūpa*, "form", but here "body"
b) *vedanā*, "sensation and feeling"

c) *saññā*, "ideation" including "perception"

d) *sankhārā*, "creative acts"

e) *viññāṇa*, "consciousness"

All these terms have been fully discussed in earlier chapters. A comparison between the Western and the Buddhist analysis of personality shows similarities but also differences. Among the *khandhā*, some factors are missing which we find important, especially the motivating forces; this field is in a more general way covered by *sankhārā*; there are, however, many specific Pāli terms for "needs" and "desires", but they are not included among the *khandhā*, since they were seen as by-products of perception and feeling. There is also no term for "memory", which was a rather neglected field in early Buddhism; its home is probably *viññāṇa*. Thinking and imagination are forms of *saññā* but the more special equivalents, *vitakka* and *papañca*, are not included among the *khandhā*.

According to the Western idea, personality is an organized unity of traits and processes. The Buddhist view is similar, but the process-character, the part-functions and the lack of real unity are much more stressed. In S IV 196 ff the simile is told about a king who listens to the sound of a *vīṇā* for the first time and is delighted. He is shown the instrument, but he wants the sound. People tell him that "it speaks because it is compounded of various parts", but he insists on seeing the part that is the music and breaks up the *vīṇā* into small pieces and finally burns it - but finds no music. "In the same way a monk investigates the body, sensation, ideation, the creative processes, consciousness ... but he finds nothing like 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am'" (*Evam eva kho ... bhikkhu rūpaṃ samanesati yāvatā rūpassa gati, vedanaṃ ...., saññaṃ ..., sankhāre ..., viññāṇaṃ samanesati yāvatā viññāṇassa gati,...Ahan ti vā Mamanti vā Asmīti vā tam pi tassa na hoti*). The *vīṇā* is, of course, a functional unit. Without the correct combination or organization of the parts there will be no music. The human personality is said to be like the music, and the importance of organization is thereby admitted: but the stress is on the parts; the music cannot be found: no real, permanent unity, like a soul, is admitted, nothing to identify oneself with. In S I 135, the human being is said to be like a chariot: "the word 'chariot' is used when the parts are put together; in the same way it is conventional

to say 'being' when the factors are present" (*yathā hi angasambhārā, hoti saddo ratho iti; evaṃ khandhesu santesu, hoti satto ti sammuti*). "What is only a mass of creative processes, there no 'being' is found" (*suddhasankhārapuñjo yaṃ, nayidha sattūpalabbhati*). This quotation is closer to Western ways of thinking than the first: just as a car is a functional unit only when all the parts are rightly put together, so a human being is called a 'being' only if the factors are there. It must be a functional, organized unit just like the car. And we would also agree that it is only a "mass of processes"; also we have found no soul, no permanent identity.

The personality factors, or *khandhā*, are then different types of processes. The same type of analysis is found in Western psychology, although here a distinction is made between structural and functional traits; the structural traits are physiological characteristics. Ultimately, these are also processes and changing, although sometimes slowly. According to Buddhism, the personality factors are conditioned processes (*Paṭiccasamuppannā kho pan'ime yadidaṃ pañc-upādānakkhandhā*, M I 191). In S III 59 ff, they are clearly defined in process-terms. The body is "the four elements and the form building on them ... The body is produced from food" (*Cattāro ca mahābhūtā catunnaṃ ca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ idaṃ vuccati ... rūpaṃ. Āhārasamudayā rūpasamudayo*). "There are six groups of sensations: sensation produced by contact with the eye (*Chayime ... vedanākāyā; cakkhusamphassajā vedanā*, S III 59), ... with the ear", etc. In the same way, *saññā, sankhārā* and *viññāṇa* are defined as sensory processes and classified according to sense modalities. *Viññāṇa* is derived from "name and form" (*nāmarūpa*), the others from "contact" (*phassa*).

The five factors are not equally important. From S I 135, just quoted, it follows that in the ultimate analysis, all the *khandhā* are *sankhārā*, "creative processes". The same has been expressed in this way (S III 115): "The created body (sensation, ideation, processes, consciousness) he knows correctly as created" (*Sankhataṃ rūpaṃ Sankhataṃ rūpan ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*, etc). This means, as has been pointed out in different contexts, that the perceptual process really is the world-producer or at least one essential part of it. Even the body is a bundle of perceptual productions. There is no real difference between the

"real" body and the perceived body or the body constructed mentally; they are all there because of the same type of creative processes (*sankhārā*). Just as a painter with the help of paints and a well-planed board can produce a picture of a human being complete in all parts, "even so the untrained layman creates and recreates his body, sensation, ideation, activities and consciousness" (*evam eva kho ... assutavā puthujjano rūpañ-ñeva abhinibbattento abhinibbatteti*, etc., S III 152). This passage may mainly refer to the process of rebirth, and we shall return to it presently, but the processes may ultimately be the same, both in our ordinary construction of ourselves and our world, and our creation of our recurrent existence.

*Viññāṇa* has also a special position among the personality factors. The "body-element", the "sensation-element", the "ideation-element" and the "activity-element" are said to be the "home of consciousness" (*Rūpadhātu kho ... viññāṇassa oko ... Vedanādhātu*, etc., S III 9). "By means of the body, consciousness would be placed, if it is placed. With body for its object, with body for its platform, seeking a means of enjoyment, it would attain growth, increase, abundance" (*Rūpupāyaṃ ... viññāṇaṃ tiṭṭhamānaṃ tiṭṭheyya rūpārammaṇaṃ rūpapatiṭṭhaṃ nandupasevanaṃ vuddhiṃ virūḷhiṃ vepullaṃ āpajjeyya*, S III 54 f; the same is repeated for *vedanā*, *saññā* and *sankhārā*). This passage refers to the special part played by *viññāṇa* in the process of rebirth: by desire for and attachment to body, sensations, images and activities, the *viññāṇa*- processes are placed and create the foundation for a new individual. These "supporting objects" are here mentioned as *khandhā* but are in other contexts referred to as *nāmarūpa*. We will come back to this subject.

The *khandhā* are then personality factors, defined as conditioned processes. We must, therefore, distinguish between the isolated process, e.g. an act of perception, like the detection of a flower, and the factor of perception, which is a name for all perceptual processes. The personality factors are five different types of conscious processes going on from birth to death as illustrated in Fig. 5. Here the personality factors are illustrated by parallel lines, running from birth to death. But

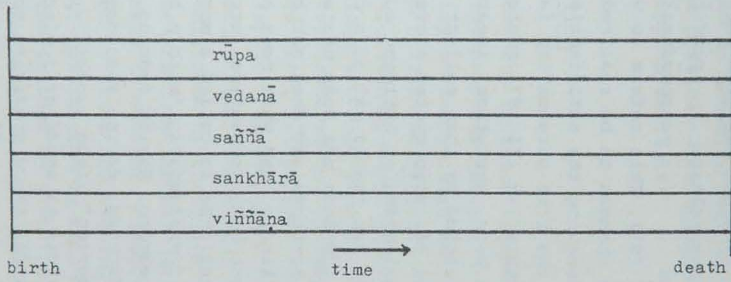



Fig. 5. The *khandhā* are personality factors.

this is of course unrealistic, since the human personality is not static. Consider the following passages: "A monk might think: 'May I obtain such a body in future time; may I have such sensations, such ideations, such activities, such consciousness in the future!' In this way there may be a variety of wish and desire for the five personality factors" (*Idha ... ekaccassa evaṃ hoti: Evaṃrūpo siyaṃ anāgataṃ addhānaṃ; evaṃvedano ... evaṃsaññī ... evaṃsaṅkhāro ... evaṃviññāṇo siyaṃ anāgataṃ addhānaṃ. Evaṃ kho ... siyā pañcupādānakkhandhesu chandarāgavemattatā*, S III 101). This refers to wishes in the present life; they concern changes to be realized in this life or the next. "While he, observing the satisfaction, is attached, bound and infatuated, the five personality factors go on to accumulation for the future" (M III 287, quoted earlier). "Suppose I were to collect body, sensation, ideation, activities, consciousness. Conditioned by that collection, there would be growth ..." (S III 94, also quoted above). These quotations indicate that a collecting or building activity goes on during the present life. But "he is called a disciple of the noble one who reduces and does not heap up; who abandons and does not collect; who scatters and does not bind together; who quenches and does not kindle. And what does he reduce instead of heap up? He reduces body (sensation, etc.) and does not heap it up". And further: "He is called a monk (*bhikkhu*, further down qualified as *vimuttacitta*, 'with a free mind') who neither heaps up nor reduces. Having reduced, he remains without abandoning or collecting. Having abandoned, he remains without scattering or gathering" (*Ayaṃ vuccati ... ariyasāvako apacināti no ācināti; pajahati na upādiyati; viseneti no usseneti; vidhūpeti na sandhūpeti. Kiñca apacināti no ācināti? Rūpaṃ apacināti no ācināti; vedanaṃ, saññaṃ, saṅkhāre, viññāṇaṃ apacināti no ācināti. .... Ayaṃ vuccati ... bhikkhu nevācināti na apacināti; apacinitvā ṭhito neva pajahati na upādiyati; pajahitvā ṭhito neva viseneti na usseneti*, S III 89, 90). We have then a description of three possible phases in a man's life. In an ordinary layman there is expansion and growth. This goes on as a preparation for the next life. He heaps up *kamma*-effects (meritorious or otherwise), his personality

changes, expands and becomes more and more involved in this world. But this process is reversed as soon as the Buddhist training has begun. When he attains arahantship, his involvements and his *kamma*-accumulations are reduced to a minimum. His personality factors are still there, but in some way empty and unsubstantial. The course of this man's life could therefore be illustrated as shown in Fig. 6. This is actually a description of the possible developments of the *upādāna*-link in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series.

## Dependent Origination

We must now consider the relation between the personality factors and the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series, in which they all are included, explicitly or implicitly. Let us first quote the standard text from S II 2: *Avijjāpaccayā ... saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ, nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ, saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ, upādānapaccayā bhavo, bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ soka-paride-va-dukkha-domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti*, "Conditioned by ignorance there are activities, conditioned by activities there is consciousness, conditioned by consciousness name-and-form, conditioned by name-and-form the six sense-modalities, conditioned by these there is contact, conditioned by contact sensation, conditioned by sensation craving, conditioned by craving collecting, conditioned by collecting there is growth (lit. becoming), conditioned by growth birth, and conditioned by birth old age and death, grief, lamenting, suffering, sorrow and despair".

The end result of this series is birth, old age and death. This is usually understood as referring to the coming birth and the death following upon it. They would therefore refer to processes of event-type, not continuous streams of processes. This interpretation is certainly correct in a sense. It should, however, be noted that the passage quoted continues: *Evam etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti*, "This is the

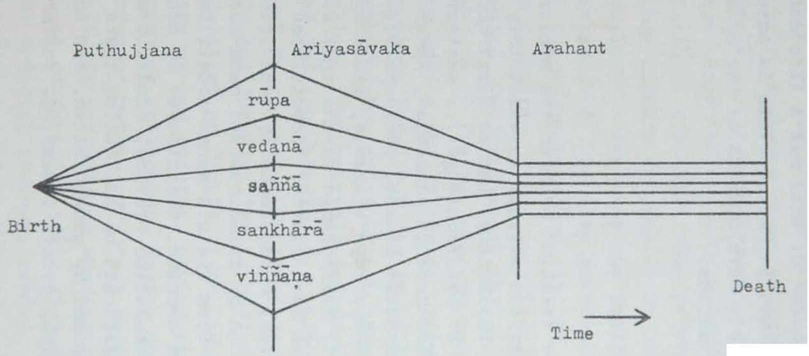



Fig. 6. The *khandhā* normally develop and expand but are reduced through the Buddhist training.

origin of this entire mass of suffering". This summary shows that the main purpose of the whole series is to explain our present situation during the present life, until nibbāna is attained. This suffering is a process of the other type: a stream of recurring painful experiences. Recurring processes of a certain type can be called a personality trait (just as a person who frequently becomes angry is said to have the trait of aggressiveness). The series has a practical purpose: to show a way to get rid of suffering in our present life; by eradicating ignorance we can prevent the creative processes, etc., up to the last link, suffering. This freedom from suffering is a lasting condition, not a temporal event. One part of the stream of suffering is the prospect of a new birth and death, the terror of these events, the continuous preparation for them.

Most of the links of the series have been analysed already. Only the first link, *avijjā*, remains to be defined.

*Avijjā* is the negation of *vijjā*, "knowledge". The main problem in its interpretation seems to be whether it is a mere negation, a mere absence, or whether it signifies a positive factor. In the former case, it could not function as the cause of a process but only as a permissive or directive condition and we would have to look somewhere else for a positive cause. The word *paccaya*, "condition", is vague enough to cover both cases.

The most common definitions are perhaps purely negative. "Ignorance concerning suffering, its rise, its cessation and the way going to its cessation - this is called ignorance" (S II 4). "The untrained layman does not know body (sensation, ideation, the activities, consciousness), nor their origin, their cessation, or the path leading to their cessation. This is called ignorance" (S III 162). This seems to be a description of "the ordinary man" (*puthujjana*) without knowledge of the Buddhist teachings. Man is born to this world without knowledge and without much understanding, and he may grow up and live his life without much reflecting on the nature of the world. This ignorance would permit him to follow his natural impulses, a victim to all the various stimuli from the environment. Briefly, it would permit all the *paṭiccasamuppāda*

factors to function.

In this case, *sankhārā* would not be caused by *avijjā*, but just permitted to go on. This may also seem reasonable from the following consideration. *Saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa* are two streams of processes flowing from birth to death. Since they are of different type, they can be called dimensions or factors (but the same words are used for each single process). They are only in part conditioned within the present life, but they can be influenced, and they can go on only as long as ignorance leaves them free to do so. What is, for instance, the active cause in the following passage: "If an ignorant man performs a meritorious act, consciousness goes to merit" (S II 82, quoted earlier). The cause is certainly not his ignorance. But he, like all the world, has creativity and change as his predominant quality by nature and therefore he acts; some of the acts are bound to be good, although the majority are bad if ignorance prevails.

There are, however, descriptions of *avijjā* as a more positive factor. It is called an *ogha*, "flood" (D III 230), an *āsava*, "influx", an *anusaya*, "disposition" (D III 254), a *dhātu*, "element" (S II 153): all these are positive concepts suggesting an active force or process. The identification with *moha*, "illusion", "confusion" (A I 194) would indicate a factor of positive misunderstanding: "What do you think: does confusion exist? - Yes. - Well, I call it ignorance; that is the meaning of that word. Is not this confused man ignorant enough to kill, steal, go after another's wife, lie and lead another into a state that is to his loss and suffering for a long time? - Yes." (*Taṃ kiṃ maññatha ...: atthi moho ti? - Evaṃ bhante. - Avijjā ti kho ahaṃ ... etaṃ atthaṃ vadāmi. Mūḷho kho ayaṃ ... avijjāgato pāṇam pi hanti adinnam pi ādiyati paradāram pi gacchati musā pi bhaṇati param pi tathattāya samādapeti yaṃ 'sa hoti dīgharattaṃ ahitāya dukkhāyā ti? - Evaṃ bhante*). Here *moha* is treated as an active motivating force but perhaps combined with an ignorance of consequences. In D III 182 we also find it used as an active force: "following the course of illusion, he performs bad actions". Active misunderstanding is implied when the god Brahmā Baka is described as

ignorant (*avijjāgata*, S I 142): "because he says that something which is impermanent is permanent; that something which is unstable is stable; that something which is temporal is eternal; that something from which one is bound to fall, admits of no decease". "The untrained layman, impressed by a sensation which is produced through contact with ignorance, thinks: "I am", etc. (*avijjāsamphassajena ... vedayitena puṭṭhassa assutavato puthujjanassa Asmīti pissa hoti*, S III 46). Here, *avijjā* is given no active content, but it is used as a positive factor, able to release a sensation.

Many of the typical active misunderstandings are called *diṭṭhi*, "view", or *micchādiṭṭhi*, "false view". *Diṭṭhi* must therefore be closely related to *avijjā*, and actually, the former is often said to come as a direct consequence of the latter. "Through ignorance of body (sensation, ideation, the activities, consciousness), of their origin, their cessation, and the path leading to their cessation, these different views arise in the world" (*Rūpe kho ... aññāṇā rūpasamudaye aññāṇā rūpanirodhe aññāṇā rūpanirodhagaminiyā paṭipadāya aññāṇā, evam imāni anekavihitāni diṭṭhigatāni loke uppajjanti*, S III 258). It should be noted that the contents of this ignorance are the same as those mentioned in the definition of *avijjā* quoted above from S III 162. False view is a direct consequence of ignorance: "In the ignorant and foolish man wrong view is produced" (*Avijjāgatassa ... aviddasuno micchādiṭṭhi pahoti*, S V 1). *Avijjā* is therefore not identical with *diṭṭhi* but its precondition.

*Avijjā* is usually placed as the first link in conditioned sequences, but not always. In M I 303, the disposition to ignorance is derived from neutral sensations: "A disposition to ignorance is latent in neutral sensation" (*adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya avijjānusayo anuseti*). This "disposition to ignorance" was analysed in the last chapter, and it was interpreted as a tendency not to notice indifferent things. M I 54 says that "ignorance arises from the arising of *āsava*" (but the next page: "from the arising of ignorance is the arising of *āsava*"). In A V 113 we find a long series of conditionings ending in *avijjā*, every factor called the "nutriment" (*āhāra*) of the next. The series is shown in Fig. 7. This should probably be read as a description of a typical ignorant man. He does not

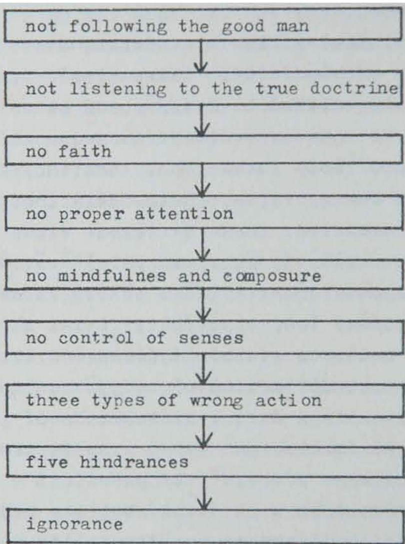



Fig. 7. The background of ignorance.

listen to the Buddhist doctrine and can therefore not feel convinced by it and does not learn the methods of meditation through which he could see for himself its truth and experience its transforming effects. Because of that, he has no control over his senses and so cannot avoid wrong actions in behaviour, speech and thought. These activities lead to attitudes of sensual desire (*kāmacchanda*), aggressiveness (*vyāpāda*), indifference and laziness (*thīna-middha*), anxiety and worry (*uddhacca-kukucca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*): These are the five hindrances. By these, ignorance is produced.

From this analysis it becomes evident how complicated the concept ignorance is. Why does the person described not "follow the good man" and listen to the doctrine? Probably because he is ignorant. Perhaps he has never heard about the doctrine or perhaps he knows about it but is not interested? And what type of ignorance is conditioned by the five hindrances? This is not ignorance in the sense of lack of information; it must be something much more active, like "unfavourable attitude", "prejudice", etc. An aggressive man would not feel interested in attaining Buddhist aims, since he is all set on pursuing his own ends. And a lazy man would have no energy for the strenuous eightfold way. In this usage, *avijjā* is a dynamic term, involving lack of motivation for Buddhist pursuits, depending on strong competing interests, or active rejection because of doubt.

The Buddha was in the same situation as any other teacher, and he came in contact with people of many types of ignorance; therefore his concept of *avijjā* is complicated. Why are people ignorant of calculus? Some have never heard of it, others do not care. Some are too unintelligent to learn, and some find it distasteful or useless or cannot muster the time or energy required for prolonged study. Because the reasons for not knowing are many, the educative situation is complicated - during the Buddha's time as now. It is still difficult to keep the many types of ignorance apart and adjust the methods of teaching to the different types. It seems that the Buddha tried to adjust his methods to many types of ignorance, by spreading his message as widely as possible geographically, by

discussing with all types of people and refuting opposing views by rational arguments, and by teaching an extensive and varied programme aiming at personal experience of what he meant (as a prescription against *avijjā*, he recommended the noble eightfold way, M I 54, *brahmacariya*, "a pure life", S II 24, *aniccasaññā*, "the idea of emptiness", S III 155, *vipassanā*, "insight meditation", A I 61, just to collect a few examples).

Speaking about the disposition to ignorance, which is derived from neutral sensations, the nun Dhammadinnā recommended the "purification through mindful onlooking" realized in the fourth level of *samādhi* (*adukkhaṃ asukhaṃ upekhāsatipārisuddhiṃ catutthaṃ jhānaṃ*, M I 304), which is a state of pure neutrality.

After this discussion of *avijjā*, we will give a short summary of the remaining terms of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series.

*Sankhāra* is the creative attitude or creative habit, but the word is also used for the single creative act. As a personality factor, *sankhāra* is used in the plural form and signifies the whole stream of creative activities during the whole life; as a *paticcasamuppāda* factor the meaning is probably the same. *Sankhārā* are the building blocks of the personal world, our whole personal life but also the world around us, as experienced and created by us. *Sankhārā* are said to be conditioned by *avijjā*. This means that misunderstandings and false values lead to false and unrealistic types of activity. As already pointed out, it is not implied that *avijjā* is the full and only cause of *sankhārā*, only a necessary precondition. When *paṭiccasamuppāda* is called a causal series, this should not be taken literally in our sense of the word. What the Buddha meant was only this: "If this is, that comes to be; from the arising of this, that arises; if this is not, that does not come to be; from the stopping of this, that is stopped" (*Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti; imass'uppādā idaṃ upapajjati; imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti; imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati*, M II 32). No deterministic motivation is therefore implied; the force may come from different factors.

*Viññāṇa* is consciousness in the sense of a conscious dimension, a stream of conscious processes, but also a single conscious act. Since the conscious processes are a form of creative activity, *viññāṇa* is said to be conditioned by *sankhārā*. *Viññāṇa*

as a personality factor must refer to the total stream of conscious processes, and probably the same is true about *viññāṇa* as a link in the dynamic series. It is said to be the active agent in the process of rebirth and to "descend into the mother's womb" (D II 63, quoted earlier). This does not, however, imply that the first two links must be pushed back as factors in the previous life. *Sankhāra* is, as has been pointed out earlier, connected with *kamma* but it is not kammic memory; this comes in *upādāna*. The creative attitude and creative ability is a necessary condition for *viññāṇa* to function at all, because every act of consciousness is a *sankhāra*, even the very first act in the moment of the beginning of life. The last creative conscious process of the dying individual is the spark on which the new individual is built: this spark will not give life and development, if ignorance and creativeness are not present. All our three factors are therefore continuous parallel streams of processes running on from the beginning of life to its end. They are continually being fed by other activities. Therefore, *sankhāra* is frequently mentioned as conditioned by other factors, e.g. by *phassa*, "contact", in S III 60, by *taṇhā*, "craving", in S III 96, and by *nāmarūpa* in S II 101: it is stimulated and reinforced repeatedly.

*Nāmarūpa*, "name and form" (where "form" refers to the human body), is said to be constituted by the following factors: *vedanā, saññā, cetanā, phassa, manasikāra*, "sensation, ideation, volition, contact and attention": these are the *nāma*-factors; and the four elements by which the body is built up (S II 3 f). As has been shown earlier, these factors are a differentiation of the *viññāṇa*-activities; therefore, *nāmarūpa* is said to be conditioned by *viññāṇa*. These two factors are so closely related as to be nearly identical, which is also indicated in S II 114: "Consciousness is conditioned by name and body, and name and body by consciousness" ( ... *nāmarūpapaccayā viññāṇaṃ viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*): "It is just as if there stood two sheaves of reeds leaning one against the other" (*Seyyathāpi ... dve naḷakalāpiyo aññaṃ aññaṃ nissāya tiṭṭheyyuṃ*). This means that *viññāṇa* develops into and is differentiated into the *nāmarūpa*-factors but at the same time builds on, con-

sists of these same factors.

*Saḷāyatana*, "the six sense modalities", are a further differentiation of the *viññāṇa*- and *nāmarūpa*-factors. These are all functioning in one or several of these six dimensions: "the field of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, the inner sense" (S II 3). This does not mean that the senses are produced by *nāmarūpa*, but only that if the *nāmarūpa*-functions had not existed, there would not have been any scope for sense modalities; these are a differentiation of the *nāmarūpa*-factors; *nāmarūpa* needs them as channels for its processes.

*Phassa*, "contact", is the factor that puts the psycho-physiological system in contact with the outer world. Through contact between (a) the body-component "eye", (b) the visual consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*) and (c) external objects, sensation and perception are produced (M I 111 f). In this way channels are created for a continual inflow of information to *viññāṇa*. But this inflow had not been possible without the sense-modalities; again, no complete causal determination is implied; but the sense-dimensions offer the possibility for these types of contact.

*Vedanā* is sensation and feeling as has been shown in an earlier chapter.

*Taṇhā*, "craving", is the individual reaction to pleasant sensations. It is a continuous mode of reaction: whenever a pleasant piece of information enters into the system through any one of the six sense channels, there will be craving.

*Upādāna* is "grasping", "collecting", "building up". Through the activity of the psycho-physiological system, fed by information from the world, experiences and kammic effects are collected, attachments are formed and a personality is built up.

*Bhava* is the growth resulting from the building activity in *upādāna*. The personality grows through *kamma*-effects and through the physical and mental activities. If emotional experiences are particularly valued and collected, there will be a predominance of emotional traits. This emotional personality will function as the rebirth personality that will produce the next life; there will be expectance of rebirth in the *kāma*-

world (S II 3). The same passage also mentions *rūpabhava* and *arūpabhava*, "growth to form" and "growth to formlessness", referring to the higher planes of existence populated by certain types of gods. The world of *rūpa* corresponds to the first four levels of *samādhi* and the world of *arūpa* to levels number five to eight; they are realized through spending much time in the respective levels of meditation. In this way, even these types of *bhava* refer to a personality development in this life. See, for instance A I 267: "Here somebody, by completely transcending form images, by the disappearance of the consciousness of sensory stimulations, by not attending to the consciousness of diversity, thinks 'space is infinite' and attains and remains in the sphere of infinite space. He enjoys it, longs for it and finds happiness therein. Established therein, given thereto, generally spending his time therein and not falling away therefrom, when he dies he is reborn among the gods who have reached the sphere of infinite space" (*Idha ... ekacco puggalo sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā, paṭighasaññānaṃ atthagamā, nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā ananto ākāso ti ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ upasampajja viharati. So tad assādeti tan nikāmeti tena ca vittiṃ āpajjati. Tatra ṭhito tad adhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno ākāsānañcāyatanūpagānaṃ devānaṃ sahavyataṃ uppajjati*).

Through this growth, which takes place through *upādāna* and probably in *viññāṇa*, *jāti*, "birth", is prepared. But the expectancy of birth, the longing and anxiety for it and its consequences are part of the continuous situation of *dukkha*, "suffering". Birth is then not only an historic event, it is a continuous process of preparation and of looking forward to it, anxiously or expectantly.[1]

*Jāti* can have a very vague and general meaning as has been shown earlier. But in this context it certainly refers to rebirth, since it is defined as "the appearance of the factors and acquiring of sense-modalities" (S II 3). There are also versions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series where the word *punabbhava*, "again-becoming", occurs, for instance S II 101, where it is said: "Where there is growth of activities there is in the future renewed becoming and birth" (*Yattha atthi saṅkhārānaṃ vuddhi atthi tattha āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbatti*).

According to our interpretation, the five first links are constitutional factors, in the sense of different dimensions of activity and experience, but also historically responsible for the beginning and differential growth of our personalities. They form the productive side of us. *Phassa* and *vedanā* are the receptive function of personality. *Taṇhā* forces us to get involved in the world, to build values and superstructures, to build up our personalities in good or bad directions (in *upādāna*) and so to prepare us for prolonged life (*bhava*) and get more and more involved in suffering.

Fig. 8 is an attempt to illustrate this interpretation. It is to be visualized as a solid cylinder, the length of which corresponds to the individual span of life. The twelve links are represented as sectors of this cylinder, grouped around an inner core, corresponding to *citta*, the core of our personality around which all personal processes revolve (this location of *citta* will be discussed in a later section). All the links are seen to be running parallel in time. The interaction with the environment is exemplified by just one perceptual act: one object outside the system is put in contact with the eye (*cakkhu* in *saḷāyatana*) and *cakkhuviññāṇa*; this contact produces a sensation in *vedanā*. Not represented in the figure are the developments that occur during life, for instance the *kamma* accumulations that take place through the activities of *sankhāra*, *taṇhā* and *upādāna*. A continuous interaction of all the factors is to be assumed, although the direction of dependence is from *dukkha* backwards: *dukkha* depends on *bhava*, *bhava* on *upādāna*, etc. This is important from a practical point of view: in order to remove *dukkha* one can concentrate on any of the preceding factors.

The whole series can be understood and applied in two ways, one general and one particular. Generally, an ordinary human being is in a state of suffering, partly because all pleasures are short-lived and he frequently feels suffering, partly because he expects birth and death. This present state of suffering depends ultimately on his psycho-physical constitution (*sankhāra*, *viññāṇa*, *nāmarūpa*, *saḷāyatana*) which permits him to perceive the world (*phassa*, *vedanā*) and make him inter-

V : vedanā, "sensation"
S : saññā, "ideation"
C : cetanā, "will"
M : manasikāra, "attention"
R : rūpa, "body"

c : cakkhu, "eye", "vision"
s : sota, "ear", "hearing"
gh : ghāna, "nose", "smell"
j : jivhā, "tongue", "taste"
k : kāya, "body", "touch"
m : mano, "inner sense", "idea"

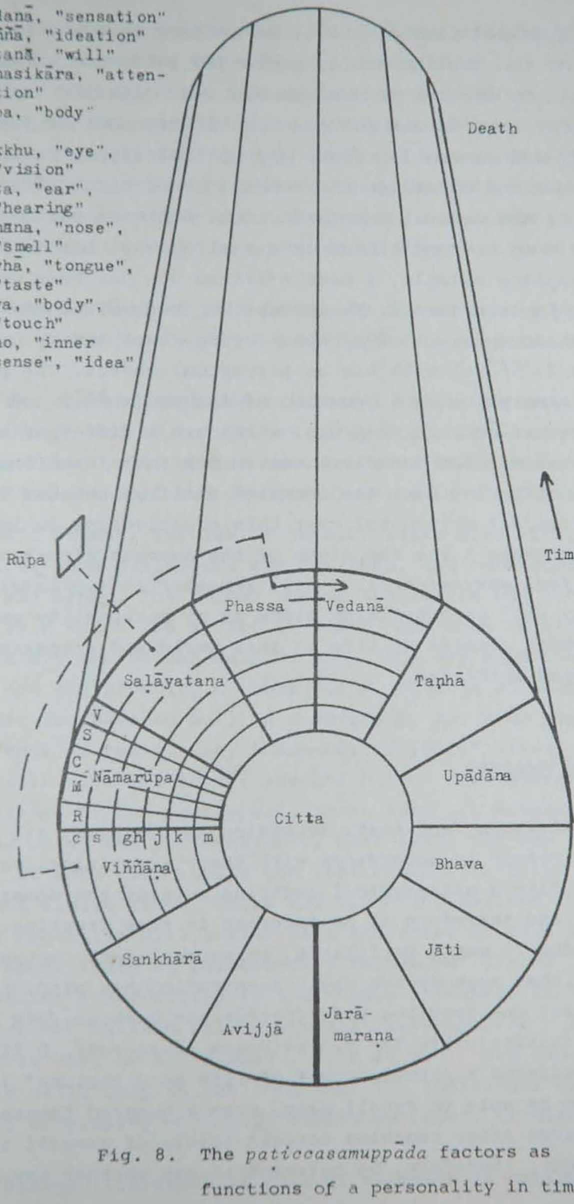



Fig. 8. The *paṭiccasamuppāda* factors as functions of a personality in time.

ested and involved (*tanhā*) in it. By getting involved he builds up (*upādāna*) the conditions for prolonged suffering. When he becomes able to see how he creates his own suffering (*avijjā* is expelled), then he can put his constitution out of function temporarily and generally reduce and control it; so he no longer renews and maintains the conditions of his suffering.

This is the general interpretation. But each particular act can be seen as conditioned in a similar way. Let me take a most commonplace example. I meet a friend who has been more successful in life than I. My perception (*vedanā*) of him builds on the contact (*phassa*) of my eyes (*saḷāyatana*) and my consciousness (*viññāna*) with him as perceptual object. The perceptual act takes place as a creation of images (*saññā*) and attention (*manasikāra*) in *nāmarūpa*, which are a differentiation of consciousness. But consciousness in its turn functions because I am alive and have the creative ability; because I am ignorant (*avijjā*) my control over this creativeness is imperfect. Now because I see the signs of the successfulness of my friend, I feel envy (*tanhā*). I will remember it (*upādāna*), and this memory will be a building block in my personality growth (*bhava*), which changes my life in this world and prepares me for prolonged suffering.

## The Laws of Rebirth

It is a well-known fact that, according to Buddhism, all living beings are reborn in accordance with their activities, *kamma*. This seems like a metaphysical doctrine outside the domain of psychology and therefore of no interest in this treatise. But to the Buddha it was a verifiable, perceptual fact. Actually, it is said that anybody can, by concentrating his mind, recollect at least one previous life (*tathārūpam cetosamādhim phusati yathā samāhite citte tam pubbenivāsam anussarati*, D III 32). It was considered a normal "fruit of life as a recluse" (*sāmaññaphala*) to be able to recall many, even a hundred thousand, previous lives after reaching certain levels of *samādhi* (D I 81). It might, therefore, be relevant to ask whether any psy-

chological factors are at work in the process of rebirth.

The basic ideas behind rebirth seem to be a law of justice and the idea of close affinity between all living organisms. We can observe the different fates of men: there are rich and poor, happy and unhappy, good and bad, sick and healthy, short-lived and long-lived. Very little correlation is observed between these characteristics, and therefore they seem unfair. But they can be accepted if these two principles are true:

(a) if each individual life is simply the momentary product of a causal development, running through a long series of lives,

(b) if the causal development is moral in its nature, which means that each act or thought of every individual not only influences the organic environment but then reverberates on the individual himself and changes his fate in the future.

To a certain extent, the law of justice works also within the single life: some evil-doers are punished, and some good men are rich and happy. The former robber Angulimāla was hit on his head by a stick and a clod of earth, and when he came back, badly wounded, the Buddha said to him: "You are experiencing here and now the ripening of that *kamma*, because of which you would otherwise have to boil in a purgatory for many years, many hundreds of years, many thousands of years" (*Yassa kho tvaṃ kammassa vipākena bahūni vassāni bahūni vassasatāni bahūni vassasahassāni niraye pacceyyāsi, tassa tvaṃ ... kammassa vipākaṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme paṭisaṃvedesi*, M II 104). The law of *kamma* is, then, at work also within the individual life-span. But this is not always true: "Those who teach and believe that everybody who kills will suffer pain and grief in this life - did they speak truth or falsehood? - Falsehood" (*Tatra ... ye ... evaṃvādino evaṃdiṭṭhino Yo koci pāṇaṃ atimāpeti sabbo so diṭṭheva dhamme dukkhaṃ domanassaṃ paṭisaṃvediyatīti - saccaṃ vā te āhaṃsu musā vā ti? - Musā ...*, S IV 344). The law of justice is valid only in the long run. The individual can verify it only by developing *abhiññā*, "superknowledge", through meditation.

The Nikāya literature is full of examples of correspond-

ences between actions in one life and their results in coming lives. In these examples, a lack of precision is often conspicuous, which may be natural because of the number of factors involved in each case, but perhaps also because no absolute determinism could ever be observed. There is no one-to-one correspondence between an action and its future result: "If anyone should say: 'Just as this man performs an action, just so will he experience the consequence' - if this were correct, there would be no pure life and no opportunity would be known for the stopping of suffering" (*Yo ... evaṃ vadeyya - yathā yathāyaṃ puriso kammaṃ karoti tathā tathā taṃ paṭisaṃvediyatīti - evaṃ santaṃ ... brahmacariyavāso na hoti okāso na paññāyati sammā dukkhassa antakiriyāya*, A I 249). "A small offence of one person may take him to a purgatory; but a similar small offence of another person is to be felt in this life" (... *idh' ekaccassa puggalassa appamattakaṃ pi pāpaṃ kataṃ taṃ enaṃ nirayaṃ upaneti. Idha pana ... ekaccassa puggalassa tādisaṃ yeva appamattakaṃ pāpaṃ kammaṃ kataṃ diṭṭhadhammavedanīyaṃ hoti* ..., A I 250). It would be false to say, as some recluses and brahmins did: "Whatever pleasure or pain or neutral feeling a person experiences, all that is due to some previous action" (*yaṃ kiñcāyaṃ purisapuggalo paṭisaṃvedeti sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā sabbaṃ taṃ pubbe katahetu*, A I 173). There is even a hint at a stochastic variation: "Just as a stick, when thrown up into the air, falls, now on its butt, now on its middle, now on its tip, even so beings, hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving, run on ... from this world to the next and thence come back again to this world" (*Seyyathāpi ... daṇḍo uparivehāsaṃ khitto sakiṃ pi mūlena nipatati sakiṃ pi majjhena nipatati sakiṃ pi aggena nipatati, evaṃ eva kho ... avijjānīvaraṇā sattā taṇhāsaṃyojanā ... sakiṃ pi asmā lokā paraṃ lokaṃ gacchanti sakiṃ pi parasmā lokā imaṃ lokaṃ āgacchanti*, S V 439).

According to A I 223, rebirth is conditioned by three factors: "action is the field, consciousness is the seed, and craving is the moisture". Of these factors, it seems that *kamma* determines the general level of a person's next existence, e.g. whether he will be born as an animal, or in a heaven, or as a human being and, in the latter case, on what socio-economic

level. *Viññāṇa* corresponds to the aspirations of the individual and especially his last thoughts. *Taṇhā* links the process to the *paṭiccasamuppāda* dynamism and initiates the building process that takes place through *upādāna; taṇhā* is the dependence that binds us to the world and forces us back to it.

(a) According to A II 230 f, there are four types of *kamma*: dark actions with a dark result, bright actions with a bright result, actions that are both dark and bright and have a result that is both dark and bright, actions that are neither dark nor bright and have a result that is neither dark nor bright: an action that leads to the destruction of actions (*kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ, kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ, kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ, kammaṃ akaṇhamasukkaṃ akaṇha-asukkavipākaṃ kammaṃ kammakkhayāya saṃvattati*). We see that the leading principle is similarity: a dark action will produce a dark result and vice versa. We also see that the system gives room for conflicting values: an action may be both dark and bright and will give a similar, mixed result. The text goes on to define the different types: Of the first type are all offences against Buddhist ethics (in A V 264 f summed up into three defilements of body, namely taking life, stealing, sexual misconduct; further, four defilements of speech, namely, lies, slander, harshness, idle babble; and finally, three defilements of mind: covetous and aggressive thoughts and wrong view). Actions performed with the opposite intentions are called bright. The will (*cetanā*) to abandon both the dark and the bright type of action is called an action that is neither dark nor bright; this type of actions is further specified (A II 236 f) as following the Buddhist eightfold way and the seven "links of enlightenment" (*sambojjhanga*).

Actions are collected to form a fund or account that will form the basis or "soil" on which the new personality grows. This is implied in S I 72:

*Ubho puññañca pāpañca*
*yaṃ macco kurute idha*
*taṃ hi tassa sakaṃ hoti*
*tañca ādāya gacchati ...*

*Tasmā kareyya kalyāṇaṃ*
*nicayaṃ samparāyikaṃ ...*

"Both the good and the bad that man does here, that is his property, he brings it with him when he goes ... Therefore, may he make a nice store for the next world!" S I 92 mentions a case where the old merit was used up and fresh merit was not accumulated (*purāṇaṃ ca puññaṃ parikkhīṇaṃ navañ ca puññaṃ anupacitaṃ*). And D III 148 says that a Tathāgata "by the doing and accumulation of that activity, by the mass and abundance of it, was reborn in a heavenly world" (*so tassa kammassa katattā upacitattā ussannattā vipulattā ... saggaṃ lokaṃ uppajjati*).

Through the accumulation of *kamma*, a new personality is formed: "This body does not belong to you, nor to anybody else. It should be regarded as old activity that has been performed and intended and now to be felt" (*Nāyaṃ ... kāyo tumhākaṃ na pi aññesaṃ. Purāṇaṃ idaṃ ... kammaṃ abhisankhataṃ abhisañcetayitaṃ vedaniyaṃ daṭṭhabbaṃ*, S II 64 f). The same is repeated for the eye, the tongue and the internal sense (*mano*) in S IV 132.

Only by means of the Buddhist method of training can these accumulated actions be worn out (*nijjarā*), and so "he performs no fresh action and makes an end of former action by touching, touching (i.e. little by little)" (*so navañ ca kammaṃ na karoti purāṇañ ca kammaṃ phussa phussa vyantikaroti*, A I 221).

The leading principles are then justice and similarity. There are two directions of development (and mixtures of the two and negation of both): there is a positive correlation between all positive ideas and also between all negative ideas: we then get two groups of values:

positive: good actions, health, power, wealth, happiness, long life, etc.

negative: bad actions, illness, powerlessness, poverty, unhappiness, short life, etc.

We can call them groups with similar association value. The law of justice demands absolute correlation within the groups. The most important correlation is the correspondence between moral achievements and the life circumstances. There is little

temporal agreement between the two, but rather, the second lags behind. So we can visualize the correspondence with the aid of two temporal curves (Fig. 9), one, the *kamma* curve, accumulative and the other one, which we may call the happiness-curve, functional.

We see that the man in this theoretical example has performed meritorious actions in his former life and rather few bad actions. As a consequence, he has been fortunate in the present life, but at the end of this life he accumulates mainly bad *kamma*. Therefore his "happiness-curve" declines already in the present life, but the curve will decline seriously only in the next life.

It should be noted that the *kamma*-curve is not really an accumulation of actions, as we would understand it, but of forces. Actions are only results of forces, namely the good or bad intentions behind: these accumulations are the moral aspects of the personality formation in the present life: so *viññāṇa* is formed as a rebirth personality. This has to be pointed out especially, because our Western tradition has a tendency to externalize everything and if possible completely disregard and devalue consciousness. In Buddhism, the conscious processes were considered all-important.

(b) The wish for a certain type of rebirth is said to be an important factor in the process. If a good man gives gifts to monks and as a reward wants to be reborn as a wealthy noble, then this wish leads to a rebirth of this type: "the mental aspiration of a moral person succeeds because of its purity" (*Ijjhati ... sīlavato ceto-paṇidhi suddhattā*, D III 259). If he prefers to be reborn as a god, this can also be achieved. A woman who has done good (*katapuñña*) can easily realize five wishes: to be reborn in a proper family, to be married into a proper family, to live in her home without a rival, to have a son, to continue to have influence over her husband (S IV 249). A professional soldier must previously have had this thought (*citta*): "Let those beings be tortured, bound, destroyed, exterminated!" (S IV 309). The virtuous layman Citta was urged by gods to have this aspiration: "May I in future time become a world-ruling king!" (S IV 303). These examples show that

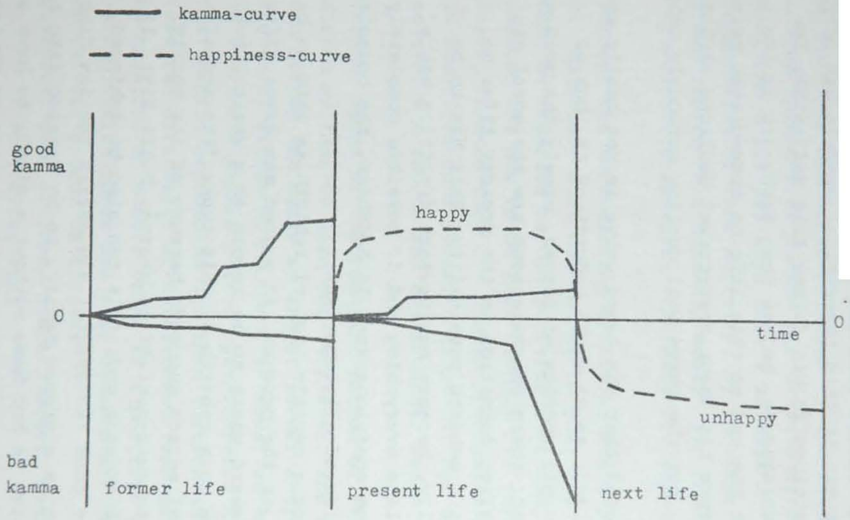



Fig. 9. *Kamma* is illustrated by means of two accumulative curves, one positive and one negative. Happiness is correlated with good actions, although there is a delay.

wishes of this type were thought to be effective, if the personal qualifications were present and if the mind was properly concentrated (*So taṃ cittaṃ dahati, taṃ cittaṃ adhiṭṭhāti, taṃ cittaṃ bhāveti*, "he fixates, concentrates on and develops this idea", D III 258). It should be remembered that such aspirations and wishes work through *viññāṇa* and that thoughts and mental images according to early Buddhist opinion are dynamic and have real power to realize themselves. Therefore, *viññāṇa* is the agent of rebirth. It is probably this process that is referred to in S IV 102: "There are forms cognizable by the eye (and other sense-objects belonging to the other sense modalities), forms desirable, pleasant, delightful and dear, lovable, exciting. If a monk finds pleasure in them, welcomes them, persists in clinging to them, then consciousness arises, leaning on them, building on them". If a person can reach the *samādhi*-level of infinite space, enjoys it and spends much time there, he will be reborn among the gods in this sphere (A I 267). Since the *samādhi*-levels are levels of *viññāṇa*, we have here another example of the post-mortem realization of a state of consciousness. The same is the case of a disciple who practises *mettā*, "friendliness"; this is a type of *brahmavihāra* and he will therefore be reborn in the Brahmā world (A II 129).

(c) It is clear from some of the examples given that it is difficult to distinguish between *viññāṇa* and *taṇhā* as rebirth-factors, since the latter works through the former. This third factor is often called *bhavataṇhā*, "craving to become" (cf., e.g. S V 432: *Ucchinnā bhavataṇhā khīṇā bhavanettī natthidāni punabbhavo*, "Uprooted is the craving to become, destroyed is the channel to becoming, now there is no more coming back"). It is also called *chandarāga*, "ambition and desire", for instance in M III 196, which also indicates the relation between this factor and *viññāṇa*: "How does one make the past come back? He thinks: 'Such was my eye (ear, etc.) in the distant past, such were the forms (and other sense objects)', and his consciousness is bound to them by ambition and desire; because his consciousness is bound by ambition and desire, he delights in it; delighting in it he makes his past come back" (*Kathañ ca ... atītaṃ anvāgameti? - Iti me cakkhuṃ ahosi atītaṃ addhānaṃ*

*iti rūpā ti tattha chandarāgapaṭibaddhaṃ hoti viññāṇaṃ; chandarāgapaṭibaddhattā viññāṇassa tad abhinandati; tad abhinandanto atītam anvāgameti*). This passage describes how *viññāṇa* becomes attached to a certain situation in the past and wishes to attain the same type of existence again. This fondness of the past will reproduce the same conditions. And, as the text goes on to say, dreaming about a desirable situation in the future may be equally effective in producing this situation, if he "concentrates his mind on it" (*cittaṃ paṇidahati*). The function of *chandarāga* is to bind *viññāṇa*, i.e. to engage consciousness for a purpose, to produce dynamically loaded thoughts and images which are forceful enough to realize, materialize themselves. In S II 101 there is another similar passage which has been briefly referred to in previous contexts but will be quoted fully here, since it illustrates how *taṇhā* cooperates with *viññāṇa* in order to effect rebirth: "If there is desire, delight and craving with regard to material food (and contact, mental volition, consciousness), then consciousness becomes planted there and grows. Then there is descent of name and form, and where there is descent of name and form, the activities will grow. Where the activities grow, there will be again-becoming and reproduction in the future. And then birth, old age and death will follow" (*Kabaliṅkāre ... phasse ... manosañcetanāya ... viññāṇe āhāre atthi rāgo atthi nandi atthi taṇhā patiṭṭhitaṃ tattha viññāṇaṃ virūḷhaṃ. Yattha patiṭṭhitaṃ viññāṇaṃ virūḷhaṃ, atthi tattha nāmarūpassa avakkanti. Yattha atthi nāmarūpassa avakkanti atthi tattha saṅkhārānaṃ vuddhi. Yattha atthi saṅkhārānaṃ vuddhi atthi tattha āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbatti. Yattha atthi āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbatti atthi tattha āyatiṃ jātijarāmaraṇaṃ*). This series is illustrated in Fig. 10. The process is said to be similar to the painting of a portrait. The painter can create his picture only if he has paints and a smooth surface to paint on. In the same way we can produce our own future form if we have desire for these four types of "food", i.e. the types of material with which the new personality is to be created. The creation is our own work: it will be done only if we have *taṇhā*.

These three factors cooperate to produce a new life accord-

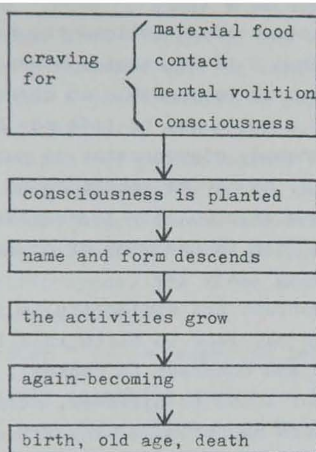



Fig. 10. How needs activate consciousness and produce rebirth.

ing to three laws: compensation (and retribution), similarity and contrast. We will illustrate how they function by means of a few examples.

Merits accumulated give reward. A person who has followed the ethical rules may easily attain his wishes (see S IV 249 and 303, quoted above). Cruelty makes the next life short (M III 203). A person of wrong views will be reborn either in a purgatory or as an animal (M I 388). One who has faith only cannot come to a purgatory (S V 375).

This law of compensation often follows the principle of similarity. It follows from D II 271 that a woman usually is reborn as a woman although it is possible to change sex. An ascetic who has imitated a dog's way of life may be reborn as a dog (M I 387 f). If somebody concentrates on pure light and practises suffusion of it, he may be reborn among the gods of pure light. A person who acts crookedly (*saṃsappati*) with body, speech and mind, can "be born in the womb of an animal, one that creeps crookedly along" (A V 289).

A combination of contrast and similarity is found in the following examples. Pride may lead to birth in a lowly family (similarity in dimension and contrast in degree). Cruelty makes the next life short, anger leads to ugliness, stinginess to poverty, and harming others may produce many illnesses. And the opposite types of behaviour will lead to the opposite results (all these examples are found in M III 203-205). A man who is generous with food in this life, will have plenty of food in the next, and a man who has the habit of asking monks for advice in this life, will have great wisdom in the next (these and many other examples can be found in D III 145-161).

It is unfortunately never stated in detail how the laws function within the action fields of the three factors to produce these results. Perhaps the example, quoted above, about the soldier who has chosen this profession because his disposition in the former life was of an aggressive nature, gives the clue. Perhaps the life experiences called the accumulated *kamma* automatically produce certain wishes and states of mind which correspond to the coming fate: low desires might produce images of animals or purgatories as symbols of these desires, which

tend to realize themselves through the power of the conscious image. On the other hand, good actions give a good conscience and hopeful images. The laws of rebirth have a certain resemblance to the psychological laws of association, of which three are especially well-known: association by similarity, by contrast and by contiguity (Woodworth, 1938, p. 340 ff).

This would seem reasonable enough. Our thoughts develop in associative chains. We feel that each thought causes the next. If I hear the word "letter", I may think of a certain letter which I am expecting. Then I think of the writer of this expected letter, and I remember earlier contacts with him. And so the chain goes on. A great amount of psychological studies have been performed regarding association, and standard situations have been devised for psychological diagnosis (e.g. the word association test and the incomplete sentences test, see Bell, 1948, p. 15-53). Associations are extremely varied and personal, and those relevant for the present discussion would be only some specific types. Now if we analyse the first link in the above-mentioned chain:

" letter " ⟶ expected letter

we find that actually something must have happened in between. The word "letter" must have given me a pleasant feeling, and I must have felt a wish to get that particular letter. So in reality, we get a series as shown in Fig. 11. The sequence has a striking similarity to the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series, and we can write it as shown in Fig. 12. The whole process could be called a *saṅkhāra*, "a creative act".

We can easily imagine that associations like the following can be produced by any Western subject:

| Stimulus-word | | Response |
|---|---|---|
| "virtue" | ⟶ | "reward" |
| "kill" | ⟶ | "soldier" |
| "drunkard" | ⟶ | "pig" |
| "murderer" | ⟶ | "hell" |
| "learn" | ⟶ | "wisdom" |

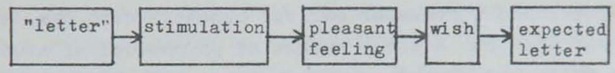



Fig. 11. How an association is developed.

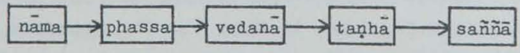



Fig. 12. The association as *paṭiccasamuppāda*.

The idea "virtue" has then produced the new idea "reward", the idea "drunkard" has produced the idea "pig", etc. Maybe experiences like this are behind the doctrine of rebirth. Because if ideas are linked to each other and produce each other in this way in our life, why should they not be able to link this life (i.e. thought; this is the basic meaning of *citta*) to a new life? Associations are governed by feelings, desires, character traits and experiences and therefore produced by causes. The process of rebirth is governed by its own but perhaps very similar laws.

## The Mind

*Citta* is one of the important words in early Buddhist psychology and usually translated by "mind". The meaning is, however, somewhat unclear, and the concept seems sometimes imperfectly integrated into the Buddhist system. It is sometimes used in a way that suggests a personal identity from existence to existence. See especially the following passages: "Though this former body of his be devoured by crows (or other animals), - yet his *citta*, if for a long time practised in faith, virtue, learning and renunciation, moves upward and goes to distinction" (*tassa yo hi khvāyaṃ kāyo rūpī ... tam idheva kākā vā khādanti ...; yañca khvassa cittaṃ dīgharattaṃ saddhāparibhāvitaṃ sīla-suta-cāga-paribhāvitaṃ, taṃ uddhagāmi hoti visesagāmi*, S V 369 f). "Without understanding the thoughts of his inner sense he runs with restless *citta* from existence to existence" (*Avidvā manaso vitakke hurāhuraṃ dhāvati bhantacitto*, U 37). "My *citta* is not of such nature that it will return to the plane of sense-pleasures - knowing this, his *citta* is well provided with understanding" (*Anāvattidhammaṃ me cittaṃ kāmabhavāyā-ti paññāya cittaṃ suparicitaṃ hoti*, A IV 402). In these cases *citta* seems to signify a surviving entity.

This is one end of the spectrum. In the other, *citta* is clearly used for thought processes. See, for instance, the passages quoted above from S IV 309 and D III 258. See also D II 299 where *citta* is called "something that comes to be

(*samudaya-dhamma*) and "something that passes away" (*vaya-dhamma*). This is said in a context where exercises in mindfulness directed towards *citta* are described. These imply an analytical attitude towards its objects. In the same context, S V 184, *citta* is derived from *nāmarūpa* (*Nāmarūpa-samudayā cittassa samudayo*, "*Citta*, i.e. thought, arises as a result of the arising of name and form") - the only context in which *citta* is said to arise from a cause.

Most typically, *citta* has a meaning between these extremes, referring to a personal psychological factor responsible for the unity and continuity of the human being but without any suggestion of permanent substance. To know a person's *citta* is to know his individual characteristics: "The recluse Gotama knows my *citta*" (*cittam me samaṇo Gotamo jānāti*, S I 178). "Here a monk tells the *citta* of other beings, of other individuals ... saying: 'so is your *citta*'" (*Idha ... bhikkhu parasattānaṃ parapuggalānaṃ cittam pi ādisati ... iti pi te cittan ti*, D I 213). "Although a monk be not skilled in (knowing) other people's *citta*, he can decide: 'I will be skilled in (knowing) my own *citta*'" (*No ce ... bhikkhu paracittapariyāyakusalo hoti, atha 'sacittapariyāyakusalo bhavissāmī'ti*, A V 92).

A man may lose his *citta*, which is a way of describing mental disturbance: "If you do not reply, I will either throw out your *citta* (*cittaṃ khipissāmi*) or split your heart" (S I 207). "If we had approached after this fashion any recluse or brahmin who had not extirpated desire, either his heart would have burst, or hot blood had flowed from his mouth or he had become crazy or had lost his *citta*" (*Yaṃ hi mayaṃ samaṇaṃ vā brāhmaṇaṃ vā avītarāgam iminā upakkamena upakkameyyāma hadayaṃ vāssa phaleyya, uṇhaṃ lohitaṃ vā mukhato uggaccheyya, ummādaṃ vā pāpuṇeyya cittavikkhepaṃ vā*, S I 125 f). To "loose one's *citta*" is probably an expression for loosing the normal unity of mind and attention.

According to M I 206 it is possible to give up one's *citta* and adopt the *citta* of others: "I surrendered my own *citta* and am living only according to the *citta* of these venerable ones. For we have different bodies but certainly only one *citta*" (*So kho ahaṃ ... sakaṃ cittaṃ nikkhipitvā imesaṃ yeva āyasmantānaṃ

*cittassa vasena vattāmi. Nānā hi kho no ... kāyā ekañ ca pana maññe cittaṃ*). A woman has a different type of *citta* from that of men. This is implied in a passage found in D II 271: "She abandoned the female *citta* and developed a masculine *citta* and ... was reborn into sonship with us" (*Sā itthicittaṃ virājetvā purisacittaṃ bhāvetvā ... amhākaṃ puttattaṃ ajjhūpagatā*). *Citta* here seems mainly to refer to the purposeful organization of activities. This unity of purpose is normally a characteristic of the human individual, but it is also possible to submit more or less completely to the will or purposes of others; this is in early Buddhism expressed as a function of *citta*.

The individual's identification with his *citta* is far from complete. There is frequently a clear distinction between "me" and "my *citta*": "For a long time indeed I have been defrauded, deceived and cheated by this *citta*, for I have been collecting body, sensation, ideation, activities and consciousness. Conditioned by this collection there was growth for me ..." (*dīgharattaṃ vata ... ahaṃ iminā cittena nikato vañcito paladdho, ahaṃ hi rūpaṃ ... vedanaṃ ... saññaṃ ... sankhāre ... viññāṇaṃ yeva upādiyamāno upādiyiṃ; tassa me upādānapaccayā bhavo* ..., M I 511). Here *citta* is made responsible for all the false values and activities that keep the *paṭiccasamuppāda*-development going. "I" am something different. "I" can see that all this is false. But "a monk has power over his *citta*, he is not the slave of his *citta*" (*bhikkhu cittaṃ vasaṃ vatteti, no ca bhikkhu cittassa vasena vattati*, M I 214). The method of getting one's *citta* under control is *samādhi*, according to A IV 34. *Citta* is *dūrakkha*, "difficult to guard" and *dunnivāraya*, "difficult to hold back" (Dh 33). It is a difficult but important task to train *citta*, because "when *citta* is unguarded, bodily action is also unguarded, speech and mental action are also unguarded" (*citte ... arakkhite kāyakammam pi arakkhitaṃ hoti vacīkammam pi arakkhitaṃ hoti manokammam pi arakkhitaṃ hoti*, A I 261).

It is therefore necessary to distinguish between the untrained and the trained *citta*. The "natural" *citta* is the centre of all undesirable qualities. The *āsavā*, "influxes", are attributed to *citta* (D II 81), further *rāga, dosa, moha*, "desire,

hatred, illusion" (D III 270), *abhijjhā, vyāpāda, thīna-middha, uddhacca-kukkucca, vicikicchā*, "covetousness, aggressiveness, torpor and languor, restlessness and worry, and doubt" (D I 71), *taṇhā*, "craving" (Dh 154), *upanāha, makkha, paḷāsa, issā, macchariya, māyā, sāṭheyya, thambha, māna, atimāna, mada*, "malice, hypocrisy, spite, envy, stinginess, deceit, treachery, selfishness, arrogance, pride, conceit" (M I 36).

So far, there seems to be great similarity between *citta* and the Freudian concept of "ego", the centre of conscious needs and conscious behaviour. Just as we ordinarily identify ourselves with the ego, so *citta* is the "natural self" in a functional sense. But just as there, according to Freud, is a superego, that is sometimes critical of the ego, so there is in Buddhism an "I" who may be critical of *citta* and may want to subjugate it and change it by means of the Buddhist training.

*Citta* also reminds us of the Freudian ego in its function as a centre of perceptual and cognitive activity. "Ideation and sensation are mental processes dependent on *citta*; therefore they are called activity of *citta*" (*Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittapaṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro ti*, S IV 293). In S IV 125 we find that forms (*rūpā*) touch (*phassati*) *citta*, and only a trained *citta* can avoid being influenced. *Citta* can be directed and is then an instrument of attention. In A IV 423 the phrases *cittaṃ paṭivāpeti*, "he turns his *citta* away from", and *cittaṃ upasaṃharati*, "he concentrates his *citta* on", are used in this sense. Cf. the opposites *saṅkhitta - vikkhitta*, "attentive - inattentive", used about *citta* in S II 122 and D I 80. *Citta* is further an instrument for the recollection of former existences which is made possible through training. See M I 22, "I directed my *citta* to the knowledge and recollection of former habitations" (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāṇāya cittaṃ abhininnāmesiṃ*). The higher knowledge which is called *abhiññā* is attributed to *citta* (A IV 421, A I 254). Free ideas are a function of *citta*, according to A V 107, where *citta* is said to be provided with (*paricita*) ideas (*saññā*) of impermanence, not-self, danger, disinterestedness and so on. *Citta* is also a centre of understanding. In A I 9, the expression *cittena ... ñassati*, "shall understand by *citta*", is found. The

phrase *aññacittaṃ upaṭṭhapeti*, "he applies his *citta* to understanding" is often used, e.g. A III 437. In A IV 402 *paññāya suparicita*, "well provided with wisdom" is said about *citta*.

*Citta* is then mainly a centre for conscious activity. *Citta* is *asarīraṃ guhāsayam* (Dh 37), "incorporeal, dwelling in the cave". It has also the mobility, the independence of time and locality, characteristic of consciousness: it is *dūrangamam ekacaraṃ*, "travelling far, alone" (Dh 37), *lahu*, "light", "quick" (Dh 35), *yatthakāmanipātī*, "wandering at will" (Dh 35). In disputes, some participants "let their *citta* go far away" (*cittaṃ hi te ... gamenti dūre*, SN 390). A passage in S I 75 says that we "roam in all directions with *ceto*" (*sabbā disānuparigamma cetasā*); here *ceto* is used instead of *citta*, but these words are nearly synonymous. These passages probably refer to our ability to dream about and think of distant places and events.

Summing up the evidence so far collected, we can say that *citta* corresponds fairly closely to "mind", being a mainly conscious stream of processes, organized and purposeful, individually formed, but no real entity. It is not the same as "personality", rather a centre within personality, a conscious centre of activity, purposiveness, continuity and emotionality. We can translate by "mind", although *citta* is a somewhat wider concept, including as it does not only the momentarily conscious processes, but also the continuous, unconscious background, e.g. all the moral traits which are not manifest in every moment but are latent, prepared to influence thoughts and behaviour as soon as an opportunity is given.

*Citta* is not usually brought in relation to the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series. From all the passages quoted above, it is, however, clear that it has many connections with it. Since the *āsavā* are attributes of *citta*, *avijjā* and *bhava* are connected with it. *Saññā* (one of the *nāma*-factors of *nāmarūpa*) and *vedanā* are activities of *citta* (M I 301). *Taṇhā* is also one of the attributes of *citta*. And we have quoted M I 511 where *citta* is made responsible for the activity of *upādana*. Since *citta* is conscious activity, it must be closely related to *viññāṇa*. But all the *khandhā* are seen as factors outside *citta* even though

closely attached to it, as can be concluded from S III 46: "his *citta* detaches itself from the body, sensation, ideation, activities, consciousness, and is freed from the influxes without (further) collecting" (... *rūpasmiṃ, vedanāya, saññāya, saṅkhāresu, viññāṇasmiṃ cittaṃ virajjati vimuccati anupādāya āsavehi*). It seems therefore realistic to put *citta* in the centre of the revolving *paṭiccasamuppāda* processes as has been done in Fig. 8. *Citta* is the basis carrying the personality factors and the *paṭiccasamuppāda* processes. By means of the Buddhist training *citta* becomes free and the *khandhā* become reduced. The *paṭiccasamuppāda* processes are the waves on the surface of *citta*; the task is to calm them and neutralize them. When this is done, *citta* can break its shell and become stable and unlimited.

Ways of improving and purifying *citta* are often described in the Nikāyas. Frequently formulations are chosen which remind us of some instrument that has to be improved, sharpened or cleaned in order to become more effective. "The ambition and desire in the eye (and other senses) is a defilement of *citta*". When these impurities are got rid of and "*citta* is fortified with renunciation, then it appears to be pliable for penetrating those things that are to be realized" (*Yo ... cakkhusmiṃ chandarāgo cittasseso upakkileso ...; nekkhammaparibhāvitaṃ cittaṃ kammaniyaṃ khāyati abhiññā sacchikaraṇiyesu dhammesu*, S III 232). *Citta* must be cleaned (*cittaṃ parisodheti*, D I 71), made straight (*cittaṃ attano ujukaṃ akaṃsu*, S I 26; *ujuṃ karoti*, Dh 33) like a bow, and made luminous (*sappabhāsaṃ cittaṃ bhāveti*, "creates a luminous *citta*", D III 223; *pabhassaraṃ*, A I 10).

*Citta* is made luminous by means of the form of meditation in which one "attends to the visualization of light" (*ālokasaññaṃ manasikaroti*) and which may lead to "the attainment of knowledge and vision" (*ñāṇa-dassana-paṭilābha*). *Citta* is the component of personality which practices and attains *samādhi*: "Happy is he whose body is tranquillized; the happy man's *citta* is concentrated" (*Passaddhakāyassa sukhaṃ hoti; sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati*, S V 69). *Samādhi* is called *cittass' ekaggatā*, "one-pointedness of *citta*" (D II 217). "By getting rid of evil unskilled intentions, namely covetousness, aggressiveness and destructiveness, my *citta* will become unlimited, immeasurable

and well developed" (*tesam pahānā aparittañ ca me cittaṃ bhavissati, appamāṇaṃ subhāvitaṃ*, M II 262). Exercises in mindfulness are also used for the development of *citta*: "Remain with *citta* well established in the four applications of mindfulness!" (*Catusu ... satipaṭṭhānesu supatiṭṭhitacittā viharatha*, S V 184).

The trained *citta* will attain *paññā*, "understanding", and freedom from the *āsavā* (D II 81). The monk can direct his *citta* and he "brings it towards the deathless element" (*amatāya dhātuyā cittaṃ upasaṃharati*, A IV 423). This is the same as saying that *citta* attains nibbāna: "If a monk's *citta* is unattached to the form-element (sensation, ideation, the activities, consciousness) and is detached and free from the influxes without building up - then it is steadfast by its freedom, content by its steadfastness, and by being content it does not crave further: and free from craving it by itself attains to *parinibbāna*" (*Rūpadhātuyā ... vedanādhātuyā ... saññādhātuyā ... sankhāradhātuyā ... viññāṇadhātuyā ce ... bhikkhuno cittaṃ virattaṃ vimuttaṃ hoti anupādāya āsavehi, vimuttatā ṭhitaṃ, ṭhitattā santussitaṃ, santussitattā na paritassati, aparitassaṃ paccattaññeva parinibbāyati*, S III 45).

The trained *citta* is unemotional and stable: *vūpasanta*, "calmed" (D I 71), *ānejjappatta*, "imperturbable" (D I 76), *avera*, "free from anger" (D I 247), *danta gutta rakkhita saṃvuta*, "tamed, controlled, guarded, restrained" (A I 7), *anāvila*, "untroubled" (A I 9). Instead of the emotions, *mettā*, "friendliness", has been developed (M I 18). Although the desires have gone, there may still be motivation to activity: "That *citta* which is free from desire, hatred and illusion - originating from this there are skilled moral habits" (*Yaṃ cittaṃ vītarāgaṃ vītadosaṃ vītamohaṃ - itosamuṭṭhānā kusala-sīlā*, M II 27). *Citta* may "incline towards ardour, devotion, perseverance and exertion" (*namati ātappāya anuyogāya sātaccāya padhānāya*, D III 239). As a result of the training, we find then a development from impulsiveness and desire to will and determination, from immaturity to maturity, from fickleness to character.

After attaining nibbāna, the arahant still has his conscious life, which is the same as saying that he still has *citta* (see,

e.g. S IV 164, *suvimuttacitto Bhagavā*, "the Master has a well-liberated *citta*"). It is a very much transformed *citta*, characterized by stability, reduction, freedom from dependence. Most of the activities contained in the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series have ceased. Only activities and thoughts that do not produce kammic effects remain. All expansiveness and external engagement has disappeared. But *citta* has not lost its individual character, although stability and "emptiness" prevail.

## The Ego-Illusion

When we introspect, we never find "ourselves". We only find a flow of processes, perceptions, feelings, memory fragments, dreams and imaginations, desires. None of these is permanent but every state changes and is soon replaced by something else. But at the same time, we find recurrent themes and a continuity. We have certain wishes and purposes which we pursue for a long time. We have memory. We have built up an ego-image, i.e. a number of ideas and images that keep recurring and by which we maintain our identity.

In Buddhism, the continuity and basic unity of a person is not denied, although rarely stressed. It is a function of *citta*, especially of the trained *citta*; the untrained *citta* has also continuity but is as unstable and easily distracted as the ordinary person usually is. But the value of determined effort and systematic striving towards the Buddhist goal is frequently stressed.

The Buddha, however, denied the existence of an ego. "The goal is told, but the ego is not mentioned" (*Attho ca vutto attā ca anupanīto*, A III 359). "Who touches? - Not a fit question, said the Master. I do not say that (somebody) touches" (*Ko nu kho ... phusatīti? - No kallo pañhoti Bhagavā avoca. Phusatīti aham na vadāmi*, S II 13). The kind of statement he wanted to make was rather: "conditioned by the sixfold sense modalities there is contact". "The eye is empty of an ego or anything belonging to an ego" (*Cakkhuṃ kho ... suññaṃ attena vā attaniyena vā*, S IV 54). And forms, visual consciousness,

visual contact, and further all the other senses, their objects and the consciousness of them are in the same manner said to be empty of an ego. "The untrained ordinary man ... looks upon his body (sensation, ideation, activities, consciousness) as the ego, or the ego as having body, or the body as being in the ego, or the ego as being in the body" (... *assutavā puthujjano ... rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ attani vā rūpaṃ rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ;* there are equivalent passages for the other four *khandhā*, S III 138).

What exactly is meant by "ego" in early Buddhism? One of the Pali equivalents is *atta* which by the Buddha was used to express an unchangeable component in the human personality. "Is it fitting to view that which is impermanent and unstable as 'this is mine', 'this is I', or 'this is my ego'? - Surely not!" (*Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ Etaṃ mama eso ham asmi eso me attā ti? - No hetaṃ ...*, S III 49). A consequence of this would be that no illness would be possible: "If the body were the ego, then the body could not be involved in sickness" (*rūpañ ca ... attā abhavissa nayidaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya*, S III 66). So far, the translation "soul" would seem most suitable, but the passage just quoted goes on: "and one could say about the body: 'may my body become such'" (*labbhetha ca rūpe Evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu ...*), and the same is repeated for each of the personality factors. "When you say: 'the body is my ego' - have you then power over this body of yours ...?"(*Yaṃ tvaṃ evaṃ vadesi: rūpaṃ me attā ti, vattati te tasmiṃ rūpe vaso?* M I 231).

It seems that the doctrine of a self prevalent at the time of the Buddha and criticized by him was a combination of several conflicting ideas, based on typical human ambitions: the real self must be a permanent, undying essence and must have characteristics like perfection, happiness and unlimited power. Since everyday reality evidently does not correspond to these ambitions, man is forced to assume a hidden agent within, which is so pure, eternal and powerful as he wants to be. The Buddha pointed out that the unity of personality depends on the composition of the part functions and therefore does not *exist*. Also none of the *parts* corresponds to the specifications: they are all impermanent, liable to sickness and unhappiness and beyond our power.

Actually the body better meets the criteria of an ego than the mental factors (S II 94)!

What we really possess can be changed according to our wish. But we have only impersonal processes, and what is impersonal cannot be possessed. And there is no possessor!

In his criticism of the ego doctrine, the Buddha used very radical formulations aiming at a demolition of all ideas of an essence, a unity and ownership. "The noble disciple reflects thus: 'I am nothing of anything anywhere, and there is nothing of mine in anything anywhere'" (*ariyasāvako ito paṭisañcikkhati: Nāhaṃ kvacani kassaci kiñcanatasmiṃ, na ca mama kvacani kismiñci kiñcanaṃ na'tthīti*, M II 263 f). This is the most radical destruction possible of any personal entity and any claim to concernedness or ownership. The same radical alienation from everything is expressed in A II 177: "Again the brahmin says so: 'I am nothing of anything anywhere, and herein nothing anywhere is mine' - and so saying the brahmin speaks truth, not falsehood. Because of that he does not imagine himself to be 'recluse', or 'brahmin', or think 'I am better' or 'I am equal' or 'I am inferior'. But having in this way understood the truth, his way is nothingness" (*Puna ca paraṃ ... brāhmaṇo evaṃ āha: nāhaṃ kvaci kassaci kiñcanaṃ tasmiṃ na ca mama kvaci katthaci kiñcanaṃ n'atthīti, iti vadaṃ brāhmaṇo saccaṃ āha no musā. So tena na samaṇo ti maññati na brāhmaṇo ti maññati na seyyo 'ham asmīti maññati na sadiso 'ham asmīti maññati na hīno 'ham asmīti maññati. Api ca yad eva tattha saccaṃ tad abhiññāya ākiñcaññaṃ yeva paṭipadaṃ paṭipanno hoti*). This is a description of a man basing his life on a null hypothesis: there is no individual unity, only impersonal processes, there is no self-assertion, not even a comparison with others, no social role to play, no function to fill. There are no expectations, no demands and no attachment.

Still, we have quoted many texts where the function of continuity is expressed through the word *citta*!

The explanation seems to be that the different contexts serve different purposes. Where the ego idea is refuted, a method to destroy an unrealistic ambition is referred to. It should be noted that the statement first quoted is preceded by: "The noble

disciple reflects thus", and the second is introduced in a similar way. What is described is a way of analysing oneself and one's experiences, a way of mastering, making innocuous, expelling by atomizing.

*Atta*, the ego, is that with which we identify ourselves, that which we take seriously, attach ourselves to, remember and build on. M III 188 has a good expression for that: *paccuppannesu dhammesu saṃhīrati*, "one is drawn into, or caught among things that have arisen". This is done by regarding the body etc., as the ego. The phrase is further explained in M III 197: "because his consciousness is bound fast by ambition and desire, he delights in them; delighting in them, he is drawn into the arisen things" (*chandarāgapaṭibaddhattā viññāṇassa tad abhinandati; tad abhinandanto paccuppannesu dhammesu saṃhīrati*). By this interest and attachment, a certain personality development is achieved; certain views are built up: "by collecting body (etc.) comes the view 'I am', not without collecting" (*Rūpam upādāya asmīti hoti no anupādāya*, S III 105). By means of this collecting *upādāna*-activity, preparations for a new birth are made. The real enemy of the Buddhist is also in this connection the prospect of new birth, old age and death and the suffering contained in this situation. This connection can be seen from the series of conditionings given in S III 46 (cf. Fig. 13): "Touched by the sensation born of contact with ignorance, there comes to the untrained ordinary man the view 'I am', there come the views 'I am this', 'I shall be', 'I shall not be', 'I shall have body', 'I shall be bodyless', 'I shall be ideating', 'I shall be free from ideation', 'I shall neither have nor be without ideas'". Here, the ego-belief 'I am' is coordinated with the rebirth-expectation 'I shall be'; this indicates a real affinity between the two. By identifying ourselves with something, a basis for continued existence is created, actually a force that leads to self-perpetuation, a misunderstood unity that will lead to new suffering.

This is then the connection between this use of *atta* as a word for "ego" and *atta* in the compounds *attabhāva* and *attapaṭilābha*, which seem to have a totally different meaning, "development of individuality", "acquisition of individuality", i.e.

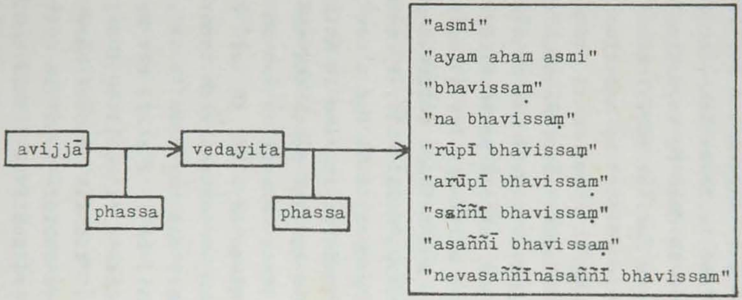



Fig. 13. The sense of being and becoming as derived from ignorance.

"rebirth". The belief in an ego is a force towards the production of an ego, i.e. the imagined ego of a new individual. This is the reason why it is so important that every trace of identification and ego-belief has to be analysed into pieces and eradicated.

The ego-illusion can be smashed by means of a number of methods:

(a) We can consciously develop and keep in mind a number of ideas that sooner or later will influence our way of perceiving the world and ourselves. One is the idea of impermanence, as is pointed out in A IV 353: "The idea of impermanence must be developed to uproot the conceit 'I am'" (*aniccasaññā bhāvetabbā asmimānasamugghātāya*). Basic to all pride is the idea of permanence. If we discover that our ego consists of rapidly changing processes, the ego-idea will be less strong. Another six ideas to be developed are briefly enumerated in A III 444: "If a monk can visualize six excellent ideas, it is enough to establish, without reserve, the idea of no ego in all things. What six? In all the world I shall not be part of it; all that will produce an 'I' in me shall be destroyed; all that will produce something that is 'mine' in me shall be destroyed; I shall attain unique knowledge; the cause shall be rightly discerned by me; phenomena are produced by a cause" (*Cha ... ānisaṃse sampassamānena alam eva bhikkhunā sabbadhammesu anodhiṃ karitvā anattasaññaṃ upaṭṭhāpetuṃ. Katame cha? Sabbaloke ca atammayo bhavissāmi, ahaṅkārā ca me uparujjhissanti, mamaṅkārā ca me uparujjhissanti, asādhāraṇena ca ñāṇena samannāgato bhavissāmi, hetu ca me sudiṭṭho bhavissati, hetusamuppannā ca dhammā*). The first point perhaps expresses the alienation from the world already referred to, refusal to take part in it, or perhaps refusal to be born into it again. The next two points express refusal to identify oneself with anything in the world and considering anything as one's own. By not identifying, all processes, internal and external, are seen as impersonal, produced but without relation to me and without interest: this is the impersonal attitude to be cultivated. The last three points concern a causal analysis; they are examined in the next section.

(b) By subjecting the world and all experiences to causal analysis, we will see that they are neutral and impersonal processes. "The noble disciple has by right insight well seen even as they really are both this dependent origination and these processes that have been produced" (*ariyasāvakassa ayañca paṭiccasamuppādo ime ca samuppannā dhammā yathābhūtaṃ sammāpaññāya sudiṭṭhā*, S II 27). "The man who does not resort to this system-building, this mental fixation, this leaning to prejudice, and who does not construct them or insist upon them - he will not say: 'It is my ego'" (*tañcāyaṃ upāyupādānaṃ cetaso adhiṭṭhānaṃ abhinivesānusayaṃ na upeti na upādiyati nādhiṭṭhāti attā na me ti*, S II 17). "What do you think about this: is the body permanent or impermanent? - Impermanent! - But the impermanent - is it painful or pleasant? - Painful! - Is it fitting to regard that which is impermanent, painful, liable to change, as: 'this is mine, this am I, this is my ego'? - No" (*Taṃ kiṃ maññatha .... rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā ti? - Aniccaṃ ... - Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā ti? - Dukkhaṃ ... - Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ kallan nu taṃ samanupassituṃ: etaṃ mama, eso 'ham asmi, eso me attā ti? - No h'etaṃ ...*, M I 138). "As he remains contemplating the rise and fall of the five personality factors, then that residuum in the five personality factors of the conceit 'I am', of the ambition 'I am', of the disposition 'I am' that was not removed, is now completely got rid of" (*Tassa imesu pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu udayabbayānupassino viharato yo pissa hoti pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu anusahagato Asmīti māno Asmīti chando Asmīti anusayo asamūhato so pi samugghātaṃ gacchati*, S III 131). These quotations show how intellectual and causal analyses were used to get rid of ego-involvement in perceptions and thought-constructions.

(c) Another approach was used in the application of mindfulness. As described in the Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Suttanta, these exercises could consist in simply following mental or physiological processes with attention and trying to be aware of every change and observe, for instance, how "the body is something that comes to be or something that passes away" (D II 292). "In going, standing, sitting, sleeping, watching, talking, or keeping silence he knows what he is doing". This type of exercise

will develop a new direction to attention. We are used to attend to the purpose of our movements. Usually we want to achieve something and expect that our organism will function automatically to help us attain what we desire. Mindfulness turns the attention away from the goals, from our desires, from the continuity in our lives towards the details, the particular movements or particular ideas. Consciousness is split up into atoms, in a way that resembles the theoretical analysis that the early European associationist psychologists tried in the nineteenth century. But in early Buddhism, the purpose was practical: by attending to the atoms of behaviour and consciousness, the sense of purpose was lost and so ego-involvement was lost: the ego-illusion could be conquered.

Other types of meditation can serve the same purpose, for instance *samādhi*: "It is possible that a monk can acquire such concentration that in this body with its consciousness he has no disposition to pride that produces 'I' or 'mine'" (*Siyā ... bhikkhuno tathārūpo samādhipaṭilābho yathā imasmiñ ca saviññāṇake kāye ahankāra-mamankāra-mānānusayā nāssu*, A I 132). The higher levels of *samādhi* are states of emptiness, and naturally all ideas of "I" or identification disappear; the experience is completely impersonal. But there is also a meditation on emptiness, called *suññatā cetovimutti*: a monk goes, for instance, "to a forest and reflects: 'this is empty of ego or of what belongs to an ego'" (*bhikkhu araññagato ... iti paṭisañcikkhati: suññaṃ idam attena vā attaniyena vā ti*, M I 297).

## The Reduced Personality

In Fig. 6 the personality of the arahant was represented as reduced and static. We must briefly investigate what this means.

An arahant has still his senses: "The Master has eye; he sees form with the eye ... He has tongue: he feels taste with the tongue ... He has an inner sense; he experiences images through the inner sense" (*Saṃvijjati ... Bhagavato cakkhu; phassati Bhagavā cakkhunā rūpaṃ; ... Saṃvijjati ... Bhagavato jivhā; sāyati Bhagavā jivhāya rasaṃ; ... Saṃvijjati ... Bhagavato mano;*

*jānāti Bhagavā manasā dhammaṃ*, S IV 164). The five personality factors are still present. The arahant Sāmidatta says in Ta 90: "The five factors are well understood; they still remain although their roots are cut off". There is no doubt that an arahant looked like and could function like an ordinary human being.

Still, it is clear from the texts that the factors have changed somehow: "If one should try to define the Tathāgata by the body, that body of the Tathāgata is abandoned ... The Tathāgata is free from definition by body. He is deep, boundless, unfathomable, like the great ocean" (*Yena rūpena tathāgataṃ paññāpayamāno paññāpeyya, taṃ rūpaṃ tathāgatassa pahīnaṃ ... Rūpasaṅkhāya vimutto ... tathāgato gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogāho seyyathāpi mahāsamuddo*, S IV 376). The same passage is repeated for the other factors. "If gods and men looked for him they did not find him, here or in the other world" (*pariyesamānā na ca ajjhagamuṃ devā manussā idha vā huraṃ vā*, S I 23). "In this very life a Tathāgata is not to be regarded as existing in truth, in reality" (*diṭṭheva dhamme saccato thetato tathāgato anupalabbhiyamāno*, S III 112). "I say that in this very life a Tathāgata is untraceable" (*Diṭṭhe vāhaṃ ... dhamme tathāgataṃ ananuvejjo ti vadāmi*, M I 140). These quotations seem to show that, in the arahant, the personality factors have become less substantial and real, more impersonal, more fleeting and formless.[2]

There are a number of factors to be considered if we want to understand the significance of this transparency and unreality of the liberated personality.

(a) First, it should not be forgotten that the whole material world was at that time not conceived as so substantial as we are accustomed to believe. As we have pointed out in earlier chapters, there are only processes and a display of forces, not substance. Things were never seen as hard and definite, they were always in a fluctuating psycho-physical state. "Body is like a lump of foam" (*Phenapiṇḍūpamaṃ rūpaṃ*, S III 142). But with ordinary people, the forms were always substantial enough to be perceived and recognized.

(b) In the arahant, the body and the other factors are

"cut down at the root, made like a palm-tree stump", since all desire for them has gone. If you no longer depend on the factors or want their continuation and regeneration, there will be no force behind them and they will wither and die like a cut-down tree. The factors are like the head and feet of a tortoise protruding from under its shell: "take out the tortoise, get rid of the five factors!" (*ukkhipa kummaṃ, pajaha pañc'upādānakkhandhe*, M I 144).

(c) The case of the arahant Upasena (S IV 40 f) is worth referring to again. He had for a long time eradicated "the dispositions to pride that produces 'I' or 'mine'"(*ahankāra-mamankāra-mānānusayā*), and when he died from a snake-bite and was carried out, "his body was scattered like a handful of chaff". It seems that the ego-illusion is the glue or, rather, the structural tension that keeps the person together in a certain form. It gives a feeling of unity. A person without this feeling of identity or a wish to keep his identity or assert it will easily get a sense of unreality and of falling apart. We know that this is valid for the psychological side of a person, but according to the Nikāya way of thinking, there was no real difference between the psychological and physical sides of a person.

(d) This is also the background of another passage: when the Tathāgata concentrates body in mind and mind in body, his body will easily rise up from the ground, "just like a ball of thistle-down" (S V 284). This shows that the body can be influenced by psychological factors like concentration. *Samādhi* will produce a number of psychological changes. In the higher levels of *samādhi*, there will be an experience of thinness and boundlessness. In the sphere of infinite space, the meditating monk "has become invisible to the evil one" (*adassanaṃ gato pāpimato*, A IV 434). This probably means that he has become one with the infinite space, as undifferentiated, thin and unlimited as space; because that is his experience, such he has become, and he cannot be seen. Repeated experiences of this type probably produced a permanent awareness of vagueness and unsubstantiality.

(e) Exercises in mindfulness were analytical but also im-

plied a changed accentuation: in many *sati*-exercises the purpose of perception is no longer to receive information but to prevent the mind from getting involved. The object of attention is the perceptual process itself. The result of such exercises must be a sense of unreality. The world will certainly look more and more "like a mirage".

The result of all these factors combined will be a reduced feeling of identity. The whole person will feel eroded and without substance. And since the personal feeling was considered as identical with an objective fact, the result was that "the Tathāgata is not to be regarded as existing in truth, in reality".

A question that was sometimes asked the Buddha himself is this: what will happen to the arahant when he dies? He always denied all the four possibilities: "he will be after death" (*Hoti Tathāgato param maraṇā*, D II 68), "he will not be", "he both will and will not be", "he neither will nor will not be". This excludes both rebirth and annihilation. But it is not certain that also simply prolonged existence in one form or another is excluded: the verb used here is *hoti*, "becomes", and in M I 487 the corresponding verb is *upapajjati*, "arises"; they both seem to refer to rebirth. The descriptions of the arahant as he is in the present life are, however, suggestive and may permit an hypothesis. Many of the relevant texts have been quoted already. "The Tathāgata is free from definition by body (and the remaining factors). He is deep, immeasurable, unfathomable, like the great ocean" (S IV 376). "This state has been realized by the Tathāgata, namely to reach and stay in an internal emptiness, by not attending to any signs" (*Ayaṃ kho pana ... vihāro Tathāgatena abhisambuddho, yadidam sabbanimittānam amanasikārā ajjhattaṃ suññataṃ upasampajja viharituṃ*, M III 111). "By my getting rid of unskilled evil intentions, my mind will become unlimited, immeasurable and well-developed" M II 262).

In order to understand this we must try to follow the Buddha on his own terms and forget our habitual ways of thinking. This means especially that we must forget all about book knowledge and think of ourselves and the whole world as known only

through direct perception. An arahant has stopped building up his personality; this means that he has few conscious processes. He is familiar with the empty, undifferentiated, unlimited state of mind, which is produced in *samādhi*. This is an impersonal state, free from consciousness of one's own personality. This state of *citta* is felt to be stable and unchanging. But can we say about something quite undifferentiated, endless and impersonal that it exists or does not exist? "In this very life a Tathāgata is not to be regarded as existing in truth, in reality"(S III 112). Because the arahant feels impersonal, he cannot be reborn: only persons with a conscious personal identity and the personality-tension of *taṇhā* can be reborn. All conscious experience has process-nature. But what can be said about a conscious process that has stopped? It has not ceased to "exist", because he is still conscious; but nothing moves - so it will never end? Will death change anything here? Something unlimited is not anywhere because it is everywhere. What is empty does not exist at all, because emptiness is nothing; but *citta* is empty and still conscious. But this stable, empty, unlimited consciousness was the only stable state that was known to the Buddha: nibbāna is a permanent state (it is called *dhuva*, "permanent" in S IV 370; one of the main purposes of training *citta* is to make it "steady", *ṭhita*, and "calm", *vūpasanta*). Nibbāna has got its name from its similarity to an extinguished fire; this is, according to the ancient Indian view, not annihilated but withdrawn and evenly and diffusely distributed in the matter.[3]

# CHAPTER 9

## THE INFLUXES

*Āsava* was a very central concept in the early Buddhism. It is intimately linked with the concept of nibbāna, and the conviction that the *āsavā* have been eradicated is usually described as the very moment of liberation. "When he knows and sees this, his mind is set free from the *āsavā* of love, of becoming, of ignorance, and as he is freed he knows it: 'Birth is destroyed. The pure life has been fulfilled. What had to be done is done. There will be nothing more of this'" (*Tassa evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato kāmāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati bhavāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati avijjāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati, 'vimuttasmiṃ vimuttaṃ' iti ñāṇaṃ hoti, 'Khīṇā jāti vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ nāparaṃ itthattāyāti' pajānāti*, D I 84). But with the death of the concepts of nibbāna and arahant as attainable ideals, also the word *āsava* has fallen into oblivion, and the word is rarely used in modern Buddhism.

The word does not occur in the standard version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series. It is, however, in many ways connected with it. According to the text just quoted, *avijjā*, "ignorance", is one of the *āsavā*, and another *āsava*, *bhava*, is the tenth link. *Kāma*, "love", occurs as one of the subdivisions of *upādāna*, just as *diṭṭhi*, "view", which is also frequently mentioned as a fourth type of *āsavā*. The cessation of ignorance is the cessation of *āsavā*, according to A III 414, which shows that *avijjā* was considered the most basic and important of all the *āsavā*. These are said to be conditioned by ignorance (M I 55) but also to give rise to ignorance (M I 54): this also shows the special importance of *avijjā*.

The literal meaning of *āsava* is "influx", and the idea of flowing was alive at the time of the composition of the Nikāya literature: In A II 196, the question is asked whether there is any reason why the *āsavā* "would flow into a man at some future time" (*purisaṃ ... āsavā assaveyyuṃ abhisamparāyaṃ*), if he has attained knowledge (*vijjā*). And in S II 54, the Buddha

says: "by the destruction of all collecting I live so mindful that the *āsavā* no longer flow into me" (... *aham* ... *sabbupādānakkhayā tathāsato viharāmi, yathāsataṃ viharantaṃ āsavā nānusavanti* ...). The word *ogha*, "flood", is sometimes used with a very similar meaning. In S IV 256 f we find one passage about *āsava*, and then the identical passage with *āsava* replaced by *ogha*. The types of *ogha* are said to be *kāmogha, bhavogha, diṭṭhogha* and *avijjogha*, that is the same as the types of *āsavā*.

*Āsavā* are said to arise from a cause, and "their causal origin should be known" (*āsavānaṃ nidānasambhavo veditabbo*, A III 410). The important Sabbāsavasutta, M I 6-12, shows that we must seek their origin in perception: "from improper attention *āsavā* arise that had not arisen" (*Ayoniso* ... *manasikaroto anuppannā c'eva āsavā uppajjanti*). Improper attention is to misunderstand sense information, draw wrong conclusions from it, permit oneself to get emotionally involved in it, build superstructures on it in the form of theories, an inflated ego-image, etc. The sutta is mainly devoted to the problem how to get rid of the *āsavā*, and we shall return to these methods. But from them some further information about the nature of the *āsavā* can be collected. Some *āsavā* can be expelled by control: by control is here meant guarding the sense channels, to keep the information free from undue reactions. *Āsavā* may also arise if clothes are not used only for protection or almsfood is collected for other purposes than just keeping the body alive. So all personal vanity, all interest in pleasure, comfort or prestige would belong to this class of *āsavā*. To sum up this sutta, *āsava* seems to be a word for a personal, unrealistic superstructure, built on the sense impressions, wrong habits of perception and thought, wrong attitudes to external conditions, unrealistic view on one's own nature, theoretical speculations. The main feature seems to be emotional and theoretical involvement, building on and leading to (M I 54, 55) ignorance or active misunderstanding.

Other texts confirm this. D III 240 distinguishes five roots of *āsavā*: love (*ye ca kāma-paccayā uppajjanti āsavā vighātā pariḷāhā*, "those *āsavā*, troubles and fevers that arise conditioned by love"), aggressiveness (*vyāpāda*), cruelty

(*vihesā*), body (*rūpa*), and individuality (*sakkāya*). These are all factors of personal involvement, namely emotions, concern with one's own body and one's own future. In A IV 161 *āsavā* are derived from gain, loss, fame, obscurity, honour, lack of honour, evil intentions and evil friendship (*lābha, alābha, yasa, ayasa, sakkāra, asakkāra, pāpicchatā, pāpamittatā*). Most of these terms are words expressing ego involvement in, and therefore attaching undue importance to personal interests and considerations. A I 85 says that *āsavā* grow, when a person is worried at what should not worry him, and the reverse, and also when he gets a wrong idea about what is proper (*kappiya*), what is an offence (*āpatti*), what is the right doctrine (*dhamma*) and what are the rules (*vinaya*). In these cases it is the wrong judgement that gives rise to *āsavā*: also not to worry when worry is motivated. This is probably the proper meaning of *avijjāsava*, "the *āsava* of ignorance or misunderstanding". A II 197 mentions *āsavā* that are conditioned by activities of body, speech and mind (*kāyasamārambhapaccayā*, etc.), but no further details are given.

The sense channels should be kept "pure" in the Buddhist way of life: "when things are seen, heard, imagined, cognized, in what is seen you will have only the seen; in what is heard you will have only the heard" etc. (*Yato kho te ... diṭṭha-suta-muta-viññātabbesu dhammesu diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati; sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati ...*, S IV 73). "There will be just the eye but no sensing of forms and the visual modality; there will be just the ear but no sensing of sounds and the auditory modality", etc. (*tad eva nāma cakkhuṃ bhavissati, te rūpā tañ cāyatanaṃ no paṭisaṃvedissati; tad eva nāma sotaṃ bhavissati, te saddā tañ cāyatanaṃ no paṭisaṃvedissati*, A IV 426 f). "When a monk sees a form with the eye, he is not entranced by the general appearance or the details of it, but sets himself to restrain that which might give occasion for bad, unskilled processes, covetousness, dejection to flow into him, were he to dwell unrestrained as to the visual sense ..." (*bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimitta-ggāhī hoti nānuvyañjanaggāhī, yatvādhikaraṇaṃ etaṃ cakkhindriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhā-domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā anvāya-ssaveyyuṃ, tassa

*saṃvarāya paṭipajjati*, D III 225 f. The text is repeated for the other senses).

The last passage describes how the "inflow" takes place. If the sense channels are not guarded, you will not be satisfied by simply receiving, registering, and using the information given through the senses, but you will get personally involved: you will be pleased or dissatisfied, anxious or aggressive. You will feel desire or disgust. You will build up expectations and ambitions for the future. You will try to interpret your experiences by means of speculation and theoretical conclusions. You will become self-conscious and build up an ego image; vanity and frustrations will follow.

All these are subjective superstructures built on the sense impressions, and they will result in an unrealistic structure of values, an unrealistic ego image, a misunderstanding of one's own nature. During the whole life of the "ordinary man" (*puthujjana*), a personality is built up from these types of material that "flow in", "pile up" and grow: "When ignorant, one creates just the appropriate personality, meritorious or not meritorious: this is called the fruit of the *āsavā*" (*Yaṃ kho ... avijjāgato tajjaṃ tajjaṃ attabhāvaṃ abhinibbatteti puññabhāgiyaṃ vā apuññabhāgiyaṃ vā: ayaṃ vuccati ... āsavānaṃ vipāko*, A III 414). This is of course a growth and creation within the present life, but it forms at the same time the platform for a renewed life.

It has by now become evident that *āsava* and *upādāna* are closely related and have similar functions. There is a *kāmupādāna* and a *diṭṭhupādāna* just as there is a *kāmāsava* and a *diṭṭhāsava*. Both are factors in the development of a personality as preparation for rebirth. The difference would be that *āsava* represents certain attitudes and activities as building stones, while *upādāna* refers to the building activity itself.

The close cooperation of the two factors can be seen in S III 47: "Every body (*rūpa*), be it past, future or present, inward or outward, gross or subtle, low or lofty, far or near, is connected with *āsava* and *upādāna*" (*sāsavaṃ upādānīyaṃ*, possibly: "inflated and collected"). This statement is repeated for all the personality factors (*khandhā*), and it shows how

closely related *upādāna* is to *āsava* and how the development of the factors was thought to depend on them. But a realistic and insightful view of the same factors will cause the *āsavā* to disappear: "Such is body (*rūpa*, etc.), such is the origin of body, such is the ceasing of body - in one who knows and sees this, the *āsavā* will be destroyed" (*Iti rūpaṃ iti rūpassa samudayo iti rūpassa atthagamo ...: evaṃ kho ... jānato evaṃ passato āsavānaṃ khayo hoti*, S III 152). Through a starkly realistic attitude and analysis the whole egocentric, illusory and theoretical superstructures will be conquered: all the misunderstandings will flow out and complete independence will follow. Meditation was practised as a method to keep the incoming sense information controlled; the passage quoted above from A IV 426 shows how, in the higher levels of *samādhi*, even the sense-organs themselves were prevented from functioning, although consciousness was still present.

It seems impossible to find a satisfactory translation to the word *āsava*. Dozens of translations have been suggested but all fail to express all the ideas converging into this concept, both the temptations inherent in the perceptions and our yielding to them, both the ignorance leading to misinterpretation and speculation and the ego interests which produce identification with external things and unrealistic hopes for the future. It might be preferable to keep the literal rendering "influx", although I would suggest the psychological term "inflation" as possible. This word signifies any tendency for a mental content to attain exaggerated importance to the individual. It is mainly used as "ego-inflation" or "inflated ego-values", meaning an exaggerated egocentrism. This is referred to as a type of *āsava* in M I 8, where belief in a soul, interest in one's former and future lives and constructing theories about one's own nature are called *āsavā* resulting from lack of attention. These are typical examples of ego-inflation in the modern sense, but "inflation" as translation of *āsava* must be understood in a much wider sense. *Avijjāsava* would mean "inflation of unrealism", i.e. a tendency to see personal references in external things and to find an ego within oneself. As a result, things like jewels and adornments are seen as valuable, one feels proud of

success and gains, one becomes sensitive to the judgements of others and feels flattered or abused. *Kāmāsava* or "inflation of sensuality" would mean a tendency to react emotionally to things, find pleasure in beauty and sense gratifications and develop an aesthetic attitude to life. *Bhavāsava*, the "inflation of growth and perpetuation", would signify a desire to live in and for the future, to dream about immortality and to plan for a better existence in this or a future life. *Diṭṭhāsava*, the "inflation of speculation", would be the tendency to avoid realities and escape to theoretical speculations and also taking pride in winning debates. Doubt (*vicikicchā*) is called an *āsava* (M I 9), just as analytic thought activity (*vitakka*, M I 11).

These are then the chief types of *āsavā*. In all of them, things of the external world are used in order to inflate the ego and make it feel important. Unrealistic attitudes and expectations are formed and used as an escape from realities. This tendency to self-assertion seems to be the most basic idea expressed through the word *āsava*. With this interpretation we can understand why the *āsavā* were considered so extremely difficult to overcome: they are the chief forces behind the ego illusion. As long as the personality is kept focussed by egoistic ambitions, there will be a unity that can be reborn (the *āsavā* are *ponobhavikā*, "leading to rebirth", M I 250). In order to destroy this artificial and illusory unity, the *āsavā* must be dissolved.

Several different methods to attain this are described in the Nikāya literature. The Sabbāsavasutta mentions the following seven:

(a) *dassana*, "vision", by which is meant proper attention but also insight. If sense information is accepted with a realistic attitude, it is properly understood, and theoretical constructions are avoided. In this case a change of attitude and an act of insight may be most important and that would explain, why it is sometimes pointed out that freedom from *āsavā* is attained suddenly: "When this instruction was given, the venerable Rāhula's mind was freed from the inflations without grasping" (S IV 107). One sometimes gets the impression that

this insight was attained by producing vivid visual images: "When he knows and sees thus, his mind is freed from the love-inflation ... It is like a pure, limpid, serene pool of water in which a man with vision standing on the bank might see oysters and shells, also gravels and pebbles, and shoals of fish moving about and keeping still. It might seem to him: "this pool of water is pure ..." (M I 279).

(b) *saṃvara*, "control": the sense channels are guarded and kept free from improper reactions.

(c) *paṭisevana*, "use": things are used only for their strictly functional purpose, and all ego-purposes are avoided.

(d) *adhivāsana*, "endurance": all difficult or unpleasant circumstances are faced and endured without self-pity or other ego-involved reactions.

(e) *parivajjana*, "avoidance": dangerous objects or situations are avoided.

(f) *vinodana*, "elimination": sensual, malevolent and aggressive thoghts are expelled from the mind.

(g) *bhāvanā*, "application". This is here explained as the seven "limbs of enlightenment". Mainly *bhāvanā* is used about meditation. How meditation is used in order to eradicate *āsavā* is described very frequently in the literature. By means of *sati*, "mindfulness", the sense-channels are continuously watched and no unrealistic reactions are admitted: "Having destroyed all building activity I live so mindful that the inflations flow no more into me" (S II 54, quoted above). *Samādhi* is also practised for the same purpose, and the emptiness achieved is meant to become an habitual state of mind or at least one easily attained at will. It is realized "by not attending to any signs, by entering on and abiding in an inward emptiness" (*sabbanimittānaṃ amanasikārā ajjhattaṃ suññataṃ upasampajja viharituṃ*, M III 111). The arahant who has destroyed the inflations (*khīṇāsava*) is called *puggala appameyya* (A I 266), "an immeasurable person", which perhaps means that he is not self-centred or confined to his own narrow interests but has expelled all unrealistic superstructures and has become open and impersonal.

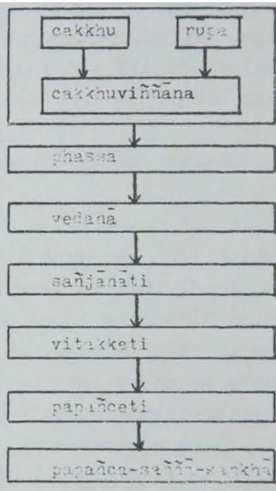



Fig. 14. Associative thinking and daydreaming.

# CHAPTER 10

# THE INTELLECTUAL SUPERSTRUCTURE

"Visual consciousness arises because of eye and of forms; the meeting of the three is contact; conditioned by contact sensation arises; what one senses one perceives; what one perceives one thinks about, what one thinks about one splits up (*papañceti*); what one splits up is the origin of the *papañca-saññā-sankhā* ("chains of variegated images") which assail a man in regard to forms cognizable by the eye, past, future, present" (M I 111, see Fig. 14). This is a purely cognitive series, starting from perception (all senses, here only exemplified by visual perception) and proceeding through perceptual images and thoughts to *papañca*, which is a type of mental activity not compatible with the state of nibbāna.

In D II 276 f we find a series that starts from *papañca-saññā-sankhā*: These are a condition of *vitakka*, "thought", which in its turn gives rise to *chanda*, "ambition"; from *chanda* come pleasant and unpleasant feelings (*piyāppiya*), and from these arise envy and selfishness (*issā-macchariya*). The two series serve different purposes and therefore do not agree with each other. We can in any case see that *papañca* and *vitakka* are closely related and that they both work with material given through the senses. They both form some kind of intellectual superstructure on the perceptual information. They are a danger in themselves but can give rise to further unskilled processes by producing emotional involvement and its sequels.

## Thought

*Vitakka* is usually translated by "thought". It is often found together with *vicāra*, and the PTS dictionary defines the combination by "fixing one's attention and reasoning out". *Vicāra* rarely occurs alone in the Sutta literature; *vitakka* is more common and occurs in conditional series, and we shall therefore

concentrate our efforts on a closer definition of this term.

A number of examples are quoted in the Nikāyas. "What shall I eat, or where shall I eat? I slept badly; where shall I sleep today? - these plaintive thoughts a homeless disciple should expel" (*'kiṃ su asissāmi, kuvaṃ vā asissaṃ; dukkhaṃ vata settha, kuv'ajja sessaṃ' - ete vitakke paridevaneyye vinayetha sekho aniketasārī*, SN 970). "When you think (*vitakkentā*), you should think thus: 'This is suffering. This is the arising of suffering. This is the end of suffering. This is the way leading to the end of suffering'" (S V 418). "As I was meditating alone, this thought arose (*evaṃ cetaso parivitakko udapādi*): 'Three sensations have been mentioned by the Master: pleasant, painful and neutral sensation'" (S IV 216). "This thought occurred (*evaṃ cetaso parivitakko udapādi*): 'This doctrine is for one who wants little, not for one who wants much. This doctrine is for the contented, not for the discontented'" etc. (A IV 228 f).

In M I 114 the Buddha distinguishes between two types of *vitakka*: (a) *kamāvitakka, byāpādavitakka, vihiṃsāvitakka* (thoughts of love, of aggression, of harming), (b) *nekkhammavitakka, abyāpādavitakka, avihiṃsāvitakka* (thoughts of renunciation, of non-malevolence, of not harming). The former group is called *akusala*, "unskilful", in D III 215, the second group *kusala*, "skilful". A I 254 adds "certain subtle impurities which cling to him, such as thoughts about his birth, his district, his reputation" (*sukhumasahagatā upakkilesā jātivitakko janapadavitakko anavaññatti-paṭisaṃyutto vitakko*): When these are expelled, there still remain *dhamma-vitakkā* (thoughts about mental events). A monk may be assaulted by "reckless thoughts sprung from darkness" (*vitakkā pagabbhā kaṇhato*, S I 185), when his hermitage is visited by women. Or thoughts about worldly life (*vitakkā gehanissitā*) may trouble him (S I 197).

An analysis with regard to sense-modalities is to be found in D II 309: *rūpa-vitakka, sadda-, gandha-, rasa-, phoṭṭhabba-, dhamma-vitakka*: visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactual and ideational thought. On the other hand, M I 301 calls both *vitakka* and *vicāra* speech activity (*vacīsankhāra*); for "having first had thought and reflection, one subsequently utters speech".

It is remarkable that in the conditional series quoted from M I 111 f above, no special motivational factor, for instance *taṇhā*, is included. Only cognitive terms are given. The place of motivation is indicated in D II 276 f, in a series which starts from *papañca-saññā-sankhā*, then includes *vitakka*, which is said to produce *chanda*, "ambition"; this marks then the transition from cognitive to motivational factors. The activities of thought, association and imagination which these sequences describe, are seen as natural outgrowths of sense perception. One could feel tempted to conclude that nothing personal is involved in the whole process.

This conclusion would, however, be false. There are, as we have seen, "thoughts of love, of malevolence, of harming". Since *vitakka* is a type of vocal activity, we can consult the conditional series in A V 113 (quoted earlier) and find that if the perceptual process is not watched properly, the three types of wrong actions, of which wrong speech is one, will be produced. Further, *vitakka* is closely related to *sankappa*, "intention". "Right intention" (*sammāsankappa*) is defined in this way: "Whatever reasoning, thought, intention, focussed and distributed attention, concentration of the mind, speech activity is to be found in somebody who has a noble and uninflated mind and who follows and cultivates the noble method - this is right intention" (*Yo kho ... ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggassa samangino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato takko vitakko sankappo appanāvyappanā cetaso abhiniropanā vācāsankhāro, ayaṃ ... sammāsankappo ...*, M III 73). Right intention involves then right thought activity. In A IV 385 *sankappa* and *vitakka* are combined to "purposeful thoughts", which are said to be based on name and form (*nāmarūpa*), conditioned by contact, subdivided according to elements and joined in sensation.

Even if a special motivational factor is not always mentioned when speaking about thought, the Buddha always meant it to be personal and purposeful, a natural result of the leading motives of the person. M I 119 mentions "thoughts associated with ambition, with hatred and with illusion".

*Vitakka* builds on *saññā*, as we have seen in the quotation from M I 111 f (just as *sankappa*, see D III 289 and S II 151,

both quoted earlier; the latter is given in order to explain how undesirable thoughts are produced). It is also closely related to memory. See for instance S V 67, where we find the combination *dhammaṃ anussarati anuvitakketi*, "remembers and thinks about the doctrine", which discloses an affinity between thought and memory.

*Vitakka* is sometimes used to express a means to some purpose. See for instance S I 39: *Nandī saṃyojano loko, vitakk'assa vicāraṇaṃ.* "Joy is the fetter of the world, thought is its explorer". D III 103 f mentions four ways of getting information (*ādesana-vidhā*) about another person; the third of them is defined thus: *vitakkayato vicārayato vitakka-vipphāra-saddaṃ sutvā ādisati*, "having thought and explored, and having heard a thought-expressing sound, he announces ...". The "sound" in this case should be meaningful words uttered by the person whose state of mind is being explored.

Having collected all this material, let us risk a summary and definition. *Vitakka* in the Sutta-language seems to be a word for purposeful chains of association. It therefore corresponds better to "thought" in the popular meaning than to "thought" in the psychological or logical sense of problem solving by conceptual, logical or analytical reasoning. But it is a meaningful, purposeful (closely related to *sankappa*), needful activity. The units are mainly verbal, although concrete and pictorial images are certainly included, since a subdivision according to sense modalities is also found. The purposes are mainly three: The first is to clarify factual relations to oneself and formulate the facts in words. To this category we can refer the type of thought mentioned in D III 103 f. The second purpose is to give expression to needs and wishes aimed at realizing good or bad intentions. To this category belong the emotional *kāma-vitakka* and the aggressive *vyāpāda-* and *vihiṃsā-vitakka*. The third purpose is to express insecurity and anxiety. All the types of thought are built on sense data, memories, mental images and ideas.

Thought activity leads to certain consequences. It may lead to emotional engagement (*tanhā*, D II 309, *chanda*, D II 277) or it may go astray into *papañca*-activity (M I 112). One

talks according to what one thinks: "the talk of the individual who is set on the material things of the world follows a pattern in accordance with which he thinks and reflects" (*anuvitakketi anuvicāreti*, M II 254). Thinking produces certain habits of thought, certain personality traits: "whatever a monk thinks and reflects on much, to that his mind will be inclined" (M I 115). Much thinking makes the body tired; and in that case *citta* would be disturbed and *samādhi* could not be attained (M I 116). "Without proper attention you get intoxicated by your thoughts" (*Ayoniso manasikārā, bho vitakkehi majjasi*, S I 203).

Thoughts may have good effects also. If a monk has passion-free, non-malicious and harmless thoughts, then he is fit to resort to lonely spots and solitary lodging in a forest (A II 252). The type of thoughts quoted above from S V 418 ("This is suffering" etc.) "are useful and ... lead to dispassion, cessation, tranquillity, full understanding, perfect wisdom, nibbāna". And especially *nekkhammavitakka* (thoughts of renunciation) lead to a growth of wisdom and to nibbāna (M I 116).

So only the neutral, passion-free, non-aggressive types of thought should be cultivated in ordinary life. But for successful meditation, all types of thought should be abandoned. There are in this case several levels of attainment. Through training in mindfulness a monk may become composed (*sampajāna*), then: "clearly seen thoughts arise, clearly seen they are present, clearly seen they disappear" (*Viditā vitakkā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbhatthaṃ gacchanti*, S V 181). In order to attain the first level of *samādhi* one has to abandon the three unskilled types of thought (A III 428). The difficulties in realizing this are well described in M I 119 ff. If there arise "evil unskilled thoughts associated with ambition, or with hatred, or with illusion" (*pāpakā akusalā vitakkā chandūpasaṃhitā pi dosūpasaṃhitā pi mohūpasaṃhitā pi*), then the monk should attend to the opposite sign (*aññaṃ nimittaṃ manasikātabbaṃ*), and concentrate on good thoughts: then he can attain *samādhi* (*cittaṃ ... samādhiyati*). It is said to be the same principle as the one used by a carpenter when he wants to drive out a large peg and for the pur-

pose uses a smaller peg. In fact, this is a pedagogical principle still holding good: to cultivate good habits instead of trying to repress the bad ones. Gradually and imperceptibly the desirable habit or way of thought will replace their opposites, without producing the dangerous side-effects caused by repression. However, our text admits that the method is not always successful and that the undesirable thoughts come back; then other, and stronger, methods may be used: visualizing the bad effects of these thoughts, or trying to forget them (*asati-amanasikāra*), or observing "the halting of thought creation" (*vitakkasankhārasanthānaṃ manasikātabbaṃ*) - just as a running man slows down his pace, stops, sits down and finally lies down on the ground - or finally, as a last resort, he may use force and, "with his teeth clenched and his tongue pressed against his palate, by his mind subdue, restrain and dominate his mind". By one of these methods, the monk may be able to get rid of the unprofitable types of thought, and then "he can think whatever thought he wishes; he will not think any thought that he does not wish".

On the first level of *samādhi*, there is still *vitakka* and *vicāra* (D I 182), but already the second *jhāna* is free from them both. M III 136 specifies: "Persist in observing body in body, but do not apply yourself to a train of thought connected with body!" And so on, regarding sensations, mind and mental processes (*vedanā, citta, dhammā*). So, the monk may meditate free from thought (*avitakkajhāyī*, S I 126), and then "he is not agitated and does not remember" (*na kuppati na sarati*). But he is still fully conscious: "I am free from thought and reflection, but inwardly mindful and happy" (*Avitakko mhi avicāro ajjhattaṃ satimā sukham asmi*, S V 156).

## Imagination

*Papañca* is not one of the most important concepts in early Buddhism but it is of interest as one of the semantic neighbours of *vitakka* and as the end link in a particular version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series. The word is the same as Sanskrit

*prapañca*, "expansion", "manifoldness".

S IV 203 gives the following examples of *papañca*: "I am", "This am I", "I shall be", "I shall not be", "I shall not be formed (embodied)", "I shall be formless (disembodied)", "I shall be ideating (*saññī*)", "I shall be free from ideas", "I shall neither have nor be without ideas". All this is said to be *papañcitaṃ*, which is perfect participle of the verb *papañceti* "split up", "imagine". Another text (A IV 68 f) calls the following questions *papañcitaṃ:* "Does the Tathāgata exist after death?" "Does he not exist after death?" "Does he both exist and not exist after death?" "Does he neither exist nor not exist after death?" Still another enumeration of controversial views is given in A II 161: "After the end of the six fields of contact there is something left (*atth'aññaṃ kiñci*)", "... there is nothing left", "... there both is and is not something left", "... there neither is nor is not something left". In pronouncing any one of these views, one "splits up what should not be split up" (*appapañcaṃ papañceti*).

These examples and the close association to *vitakka* seem to bind the concept of *papañca* to the psychological area of associative and analytical thought. Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda has therefore suggested the translation "conceptual proliferation" (1971, p. 4). It seems to imply a breaking down of an issue into alternatives, sometimes all that seem logically possible. The loose associations of *vitakka* give way to a systematical analysis.

A number of associated concepts can be collected which further elucidate the meaning. There is, for instance, some affinity between *papañca* and *diṭṭhi*, "speculation": whoever does not understand as they really are the rise and fall ... of the view of becoming and the view of annihilation, ... they find pleasure in *papañca*, are devoted to *papañca* (*papañcārāmā papañcaratino*, M I 65). The text quoted above from A IV 68 is preceded by exactly the same analysis of the problem into four alternatives, but these are here called view-issues (*diṭṭhigataṃ*). They are also called issues of craving, of ideation, of imagination, of collecting (*taṇhāgataṃ, saññāgataṃ, maññitaṃ, upādānagataṃ*). Similar associates of *papañca* are found in S IV 203, also quoted above, where the same ideas ("I am", etc.) are said to be

*maññitaṃ, iñjitaṃ, phanditaṃ, mānagataṃ*. The translation of some of these offers difficulties, but the following are perhaps possible: imagined, twisted, feared, boasted about. In this context, *papañcitaṃ* could mean "multiplied", "split up". A III 293 mentions a monk who "finds pleasure in *papañca*, is devoted to *papañca* and gets engrossed in the delight of it", and further to work (*kamma*), talk, sleep, company and companionship. This context also admits an interpretation of *papañca* as "analytical discussions" of the "splitting" type referred to earlier.

But more seems to be implied in this word. To the text just quoted there is a poetical summary, beginning: *Yo papañcaṃ anuyutto papañcābhirato mago virādhayi so nibbānaṃ* ..., "Who is given to *papañca*, like a deer enjoying *papañca*, he will fail to reach nibbāna" (A III 294). In what way is a deer "enjoying *papañca*"? The enumeration of alternatives in S IV 203 is not really an example of analytical reasoning, rather a number of wishful thoughts, perhaps daydreaming. And our quotation from S IV 203 continues: *Papañcitaṃ* ... *rāgo papañcitaṃ gaṇḍo papañcitaṃ sallaṃ*, "What is split up is desire, a boil, an arrow". This may mean either that *papañca* is an emotionally involved activity or gives rise to desires and harmful efforts.

*Papañca* is never defined in terms of verbal thought but is much closer to concrete sense experience and concrete imagining. "By the passionless ending without remainder of the six modes of contact, there is ending of *papañca*, calming down of *papañca*" (*Channaṃ ... phassāyatanānaṃ asesavirāganirodhā papañcanirodho papañcavūpasamo*, A II 162). Even the alternative questions quoted above from A IV 68 are said to be *papañcitaṃ* but also issues of ideation and craving (*saññāgataṃ, taṇhāgataṃ*), but not of abstract reasoning. "All men who have prolific image-production go on associating when perceiving; but he drives out everything that is mind-made and connected with lay life and goes on to a life of renunciation" (*Papañcasaññā itarītarā narā papañcayantā upayanti saññino; manomayaṃ gehasitañca sabbaṃ panujja nekkhammasitaṃ irīyati*, S IV 71). From this it is clear that *papañca* is a conscious activity of con-

crete image formation (*saññā*): it is summed up by the word *manomaya*, "mind-made". The following stanza from SN also connects *papañca* with *saññā*:

*Na saññasaññī na visaññasaññī*
*no pi asaññī na vibhūtasaññī,*
*evaṃsametassa vibhoti rūpam,*
*saññānidānā hi papañcasaṅkhā.* (SN 874)

"Who is conscious of neither an image nor a false image and is not unconscious and not conscious of a disappeared image - to the one in this state form disappears; for the chain of associations is caused by image formation". The first two lines probably refer to the higher levels of *samādhi*, in which *rūpa*, "ideas of form", disappears; what is disturbing the meditator and prevents form from disappearing is therefore *papañca*; if *saññā* disappears, also *papañca* will go; and so *rūpa* disappears. *Papañcasankhā* is therefore in this case a sequence of form-images.

The meaning of *sankhā* in the combination *papañcasankhā* is somewhat doubtful. I have translated by "sequence", "chain", which is an attempt to stick to the literal meaning of "enumeration", "number", as closely as possible. But many other attempts may be found in the literature (Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda has proposed "concept"). I think, however, that *saṅghāṭa*, "collection", in Ta 519 is meant as an equivalent: *papañca-saṅghāṭadukkhādhivāhaniṃ taṇhaṃ*, "craving bringing the suffering of collecting *papañca*". Further, "concept" is not compatible with *saññā*, which is a concrete image.

The compound *papañcasaññāsankhā* is found in some conditioned series, already quoted. In order to throw light on its meaning we will refer to M I 109 f: "Whatever is the origin of the *papañcasaññāsankhā* which assail a man, if there is nothing to rejoice at, to welcome, to catch hold of, this is itself an end of dispositions (*anusaya*) to desire, to repugnance, to views, to doubt, to pride, to desire for becoming, to ignorance ..." This is given as a reply to a question, why *saññā* do not obsess (*nānusenti*) the Buddha. *Saññā* is therefore the main part of the compound; the reply is intended to explain

that the particular type of images, in whatever way they are produced, should not be an object of desires. If the attitude to them is completely neutral, the tendencies in any of the seven directions will not arise. Cf. also U 77: "When the Master saw that he had abandoned the *papañcasaññāsankhā* in himself, he gave utterance to this solemn verse: In whom there is no *papañca* and *ṭhiti* ... him the world does not know." Probably *papañca* and *ṭhiti* are meant as opposites, the former meaning something changeable and the latter something fixed.

This discussion has shown a certain change in the semantic climate. According to M I 111 and D II 279, *papañca* is closely associated with *vitakka*, and some of the examples of its use (especially A IV 68 f and A II 161) make a translation like "splitting argument" or "analytical discussion" seem reasonable. Other examples seem rather to imply instances of wishful thinking, for instance in S IV 203, where the emphasis still seems to lie on the activity of splitting up: one splits up what should not be split up (*appapañcam papañceti*).

All quotations discussed in the latter half of this chapter seem rather to imply a close connection with concrete mental images, something like sequences (this is the "split", "multiple", side of it) of attentive states or mental images. The deer that in A III 294 is said to enjoy *papañca* has no analytical reasoning, but may be a very sensitive animal enjoying impressions and variety, running from object to object.[1] Fickleness of this type is contrary to the Buddhist way of life and may be implied in this use of the word *papañca*. Activities like daydreaming or split attentiveness may be referred to in several other texts quoted. "All men who have prolific image-production go on associating when perceiving" (S IV 71). "Whatever is the origin of chains of variegated images, if there is nothing to rejoice at, the dispositions will disappear" (M I 109). "Who has no imagination and no rigidity ... him the world does not know" (U 77).

A prolific tendency is characteristic of all mental life. Any perception or idea may be the starting point of a long series of associations, most pronounced in the form of day-dreaming. These ideas may be more or less controlled. If you try to solve a problem, you may start by trying to understand

the problem, to visualize the difficult point and to remember relevant facts; after that you wait for ideas. Ideas come and are confronted with certain criteria; most of them may be discarded as not complying with your criteria. This is a type of purposefully controlled *papañca*, which can result in an hair-splitting argument. But more common is the loose flight of ideas that goes on during most of our free time. The purpose of this type of activity is usually to produce images that please the ego, defend it and justify its actions; the contents are often sensual or aggressive (*kāmasaññā, vyāpādasaññā, vihiṃsāsaññā*). All these multiplying tendencies are called *papañca* in Buddhism. We have seen from our quotations that the word has a very wide and general application. The wideness of its meaning is illustrated in SN 530, where it is compounded with *nāmarūpa*, "name and form":

> *Anuvicca papañca-nāmarūpaṃ*
> *ajjhattaṃ bahiddhā ca rogamūlaṃ*
> *sabbarogamūlabandhanā pamutto ...*

"Having understood the prolific name and form, the root of illness internally and externally, he is released from bondage to the root of all illness ..." We have seen that name and form is itself a proliferation of *viññāṇa*, but this verse probably refers to the specific tendency to let forms, images and feelings multiply in an uncontrolled fashion. The combination of *papañca* and *nāmarūpa* should also remind us of the fact that no clear distinction is made between physical and mental reality: perhaps then *papañca* may mean also external activities and productiveness, the uncontrolled and disorganized efforts of some people. But this is only one aspect of what *nāmarūpa* really stands for, namely the prolific growth of internal and external factors in the present life as a preparation for the next: these are the internal and external illness which the verse refers to.

*Papañca* is then a word for a vaguely defined prolific tendency, in the fields of imagination, thought and action. It is the tendency to produce associations, wishful dreams and analytic thought. It is an ego-related activity, which gives satisfaction to human vanity and pride: "May the wise man break up

every thought 'I am' which is the root of the associative chain" (*Mūlam papañcasaṅkhāya ... mantā 'asmī 'ti sabbam uparundhe*, SN 916; cf. S IV 203, quoted above). As such it takes part in the personality-forming ambitions which dominate most people's lives. To get rid of *papañca* is therefore one of the problems of the Buddhist disciple.

Little is said about the ways to control this prolific tendency, but the most important method seems to be *samādhi*, in which *vitakka* and finally all types of *saññā*, on which *papañca* builds, can be brought to disappear. This becomes clear from SN 874. A II 162 agrees by saying that proliferation is stopped and calmed by completely losing interest in the six modalities of contact and putting them out of function. In D II 279 two types of equanimity (*upekhā*) are distinguished: one accompanied by *vitakka* and *vicāra* and one without; the latter is preferable. And this is the way to make the "chain of prolific images" disappear. We know from D I 183 that equanimity is a characteristic of the third and fourth level of *samādhi*. It is probably on these levels, with their equanimity free from thoughts, that *papañca* is eradicated. But this freedom from *papañca* should be a permanent state in those who have attained the goal, as is often pointed out in Dhammapada (v. 195 and 254) and Sutta Nipāta (e.g. v. 8 and 530).

# CHAPTER 11

# UNDERSTANDING

*Paññā*, usually rendered as "wisdom", "understanding", "knowledge", is not mentioned in the standard version of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series but has many relations to it. The whole series can be understood only by means of *paññā*: "The noble disciple has by right *paññā* well seen as they really are this dependent origination and these processes that have been produced" (S II 27). The whole conditioned series rests on ignorance, and this can be eradicated only through the development of *paññā*: "If *paññā* is developed, what result will it lead to? All ignorance is abandoned" (*Paññā bhāvitā kam attham anubhoti? Yā avijjā sā pahīyati*, A I 61). The ultimate achievement is to eradicate the inflations; the proper instrument is also in this case *paññā*: "The destruction of the inflations should be seen through *paññā*" (*Āsavānaṃ khayo paññāya sacchikaraṇīyo*, D III 230).

## An Intellectual Tool

*Paññā* is frequently described as an instrument used for attaining Buddhist ends. It is like yoke and plough (S I 172), like a surgeon's knife (*sattha*, M II 260), and like a weapon (*āvudha*, D III 219). It is a power (*bala*, D III 229) and a faculty (*indriya*, M I 479). By means of the sharp sword, "made of *paññā*", the creeper of craving (*taṇhā-latā*) can be cut off and Māra and his army can be dispersed (Ta 1094 f). To possess or develop *paññā* is therefore never an end in itself; it is rather a tool to be used, for good purposes or bad.

Basically, *paññā* seems to be a word for an intellectual function. M I 176 refers to people "skilled in hair-splitting, who go about breaking views to pieces with their *paññā*, it seems" (*vobhindantā maññe caranti paññāgatena diṭṭhigatāni*). *Paññā* is then cleverness in discussion; modern psychology would

call this an aspect of theoretical intelligence. M I 133 makes a clear distinction between knowledge and intelligence. Learning by heart will not necessarily lead to understanding: "Some foolish people learn the doctrine by heart ...; they do not investigate the meaning of these doctrines by *paññā*, and therefore the doctrines never become understood" (*ekacce moghapurisā dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇanti ...; tesaṃ dhammānaṃ paññāya atthaṃ na upaparikkhanti, tesaṃ te dhammā ... na nijjhānaṃ khamanti*). Knowledge is then not enough; more important is it to examine and understand. *Paññā* refers to a conscious, especially visual clarification of facts, laws, and doctrines. To understand is to see relations and connections.

*Paññā* is often described in terms of these types. The following words are sometimes mentioned as synonyms of *paññā*: *cakkhu, ñāṇa, vijjā, āloka*, "vision, understanding, knowledge, light" (e.g. D II 33). "There is no light (*ābhā*) like *paññā*" (S I 6). *Paññā* is one of the four "lamps" (*pajjota*), together with the moon, the sun and the fire, and is the most important of them (A II 140). It is "penetrating" (*nibbedhika*, D III 237). The attributes used to express high degrees of *paññā* point in the same direction. Most of them are collected in A I 45: *mahā*, "great", *puthu*, "wide", *vipula*, "extensive", *gambhīra*, "deep", *bhūri*, "wide", *sīgha*, "quick", *lahu*, "light", "quick", *hāsu*, "bright", *javana*, "alert", *tikkha*, "sharp". These adjectives seem to describe intellectual lucidity and effectiveness; the ability to solve rapidly many types (*puthu*) of difficult problems; and the power to penetrate even to hidden (*gambhīra*) causal relations.

In Buddhist psychology, understanding mainly takes the form of visual images. To "see and understand" is a very common combination in Pali: e.g. *paññāya passati* (M II 112), "he sees by *paññā*"; *Bhagavatā jānatā passatā ... bhāsitaṃ* (M II 110), "it was said by the Master who knows and sees". This most important process of understanding is often described in picturesque images; see for instance M I 279: "It is like a pure, limpid, serene pool of water in which a man with vision standing on the bank might see oysters and shells, also gravel and pebbles, and shoals of fish moving about and keeping still ...

Even so a monk comprehends (*pajānati*) as it really is: 'This is suffering ...'". Modern psychology has also recognized the importance of visual imagery for understanding; complicated relations can be visualized in pictorial form, either through a concrete image or an abstract diagram, and then directly "seen". Spatial visualization is recognized as a special factor of intelligence (Thurstone and Thurstone, 1941, p. 21).

In Western psychology, intelligence is usually described as working by means of thought. This is not pointed out so frequently in Buddhist psychology. It is, however, said in M I 116 that good thoughts may promote understanding: "This thought of renunciation ... leads to growth of understanding ... to nibbāna" (... *ayaṃ nekkhammavitakko ... paññāvuddhiko ... nibbāna-saṃvattaniko*). On the whole, *paññā* is much closer to introspective perception than to thought in our sense of the word.

*Paññā* is mainly used to signify a permanent trait, not a separate act. Traits cannot be observed directly, and this is well pointed out in the Nikāyas with regard to *paññā*. "Understanding shines forth in behaviour" (*apadāne sobhati paññā*, A I 102). It is by observing a person's behaviour or by discussing something with him that we are able to appraise his degree of understanding. "Just as a man with good eyesight, standing on the bank of a pool of water, were to see a small fish rising, he would think: Judging by the uprise of this fish, judging by the size of the ripple it makes, judging by its speed, this is a small fish, it is not a big fish; - in the same way, a person by conversing with another knows of him: Judging by this elder's approach to a question, judging by his way of acting, judging by his conversation, he is weak in understanding, he is not intelligent" (... *evam eva kho ... puggalo puggalena saddhiṃ sākacchāyamāno evaṃ jānāti: yathā kho imassa āyasmato ummaggo yathā ca abhinīhāro yathā ca pañhasamudācāro duppañño ayaṃ āyasmā nāyaṃ āyasmā paññavā*, A II 189). "It is by conversation that a man's understanding is to be known; and then only after a long time, if we are attentive and not inattentive, intelligent, not unintelligent". (*Sākacchāya kho ... paññā veditabbā, sā ca kho dīghena addhunā na itaraṃ, manasi-karotā no amanasi-*

*karotā, paññavatā no dupaññena*, S I 79). A person's *paññā* is therefore something hidden; it has to be inferred by observing behaviour and ways of reasoning and talking; and even then it can be done only by one who is himself intelligent. These principles for intelligence testing still hold good.

Basically, *paññā* seems to be a pure theoretical function of understanding, without a motivational power of its own. In M I 92, the Buddha recalls that before his enlightenment he could think that sense pleasures (*kāma*) give rise to much suffering and little satisfaction, but "although this came to be well seen thus, as it really is, through right understanding, I did not attain any joy or happiness apart from sense pleasures" (*evaṃ etaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya sudiṭṭhaṃ ahosi, so ca aññatr'eva kāmehi ... pītisukhaṃ nājjhagamaṃ*). So this theoretical insight that sense pleasures are not ultimately satisfying had no power to make him free from them. Only when *paññā* was combined with another type of joy and happiness could it help him. Especially causal relations are to be understood by *paññā*. See S II 27, quoted above, and M I 260: "If somebody sees with right understanding as it really is, that 'this has come to be' - will he then get rid of doubt? - Yes! - If he sees with right understanding as it really is, that 'this has come to be because of nutriment' - will he then get rid of doubt? - Yes" (*Bhūtaṃ idan-ti ... yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato yā vicikicchā sā pahīyatīti? - Evaṃ ... - Tadāhārasambhavan-ti ... yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato yā vicikicchā sā pahīyatīti. - Evaṃ ...*). Here *paññā* is referred to as a purely intellectual tool, clearly distinguishable from motivational and emotional factors. This type of delimitation can also be inferred from A II 92, where the relations between two factors are described, one emotional factor, *cetosamatha*, "mental calm", and *adhipaññādhammavipassanā*, "insight into things by means of higher *paññā*". Four types of people are distinguished; those who have both, neither, and one or other of them. Since all combinations are possible, we can conclude that there is no correlation between the two; understanding is quite independent of calm.

This discussion seems to show that the most appropriate

translation of *paññā* in general should be "understanding". It refers to an ability of the human personality reminding us of the "intelligence" of modern psychology. The intelligence factor of psychology is a general capacity to understand relations, to cope with novel situations, to think and solve problems. Each person has his characteristic level of intelligence, which only to a limited degree can be raised by learning and environmental influences. The ability to learn from experience is itself a function of intelligence. Intelligence is probably to a great extent inherited.

But although there is a basic similarity between *paññā* and intelligence it would not be correct to propose the latter as translation of the former.[1] For intelligence is a well-defined scientific term and should be used only when the term to be translated has exactly the same semantic content. This is not the case with *paññā*. There are complications and differences, and the rest of this chapter will be devoted to them.

One concerns the age factor. It is said in M I 82 that, according to some people, only young men have *paññāveyyattiya*, "high degree of understanding"; when a man gets old, his understanding will decrease. The Buddha objects that it is not always so. "I might have four disciples here who are a hundred years old and still endowed with the highest degree of mindfulness, progress, resolution and understanding". The context seems to show that clarity of thought and ability to understand and draw conclusions were referred to. From the modern point of view it would seem that both the Buddha and his opponents were right. In general, the level of intelligence in the newborn child grows rapidly at first and reaches a peak at the age of about thirty-five years. After that it will decline very slowly, although maturity and experience will continue to grow. But in some people the deterioration by age will progress more slowly than in others and may indeed be more than compensated for by growing knowledge, better habits of thought, etc. Therefore we find old people with very high intellectual vigour and achievement, although they are few. This distinction between intelligence and experience, knowledge etc. is not made in the Pali texts.

Understanding of the Buddhist Doctrines

The chief function of *paññā* is to achieve understanding of the Buddha's teachings: the doctrine of dependent origination (S II 27, quoted above), the four truths (M I 292), the doctrine that there is no ego or anything personal in the five personality factors (M III 19), the doctrine that the sense organs are impermanent and therefore painful and impersonal (S IV 1), the insight that "the utter passionless ceasing of ignorance, of this body of darkness, is this calm state, this excellent state, namely the calming down of all activities, the giving up of all foundations, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna" (*avijjāya tveva tamokāyassa asesavirāganirodho santaṃ etaṃ padaṃ paṇītaṃ etaṃ padaṃ yad idaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbupadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhakkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānaṃ*, S V 226). *Paññā* also helps to distinguish what is skilful and unskilful (*kusala-akusala*), blameless and blameworthy (*anavajja-sāvajja*), bright and dark (*sukka-kaṇha*), desirable and undesirable (*sevitabba-asevitabba*), truly noble and not truly noble (*alamariya-nālamariya*).

In some contexts it is clear that only a theoretical understanding is meant, as for instance in M I 92 which was quoted earlier. And in S II 118 we read about Nārada who made this confession: "The ceasing of growth is nibbāna: I have well seen this by right understanding as it really is, and yet I am not an arahant who has destroyed the inflations" (*Bhavanirodho nibbānanti kho me ... yathābhūtaṃ sammapaññāya sudiṭṭhaṃ na camhi arahaṃ khīṇāsavo*). A disciple who has faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and understanding but has not yet experienced the stages of liberation (*vimokhā*) and is not yet free from inflations, is called "follower of the doctrine" (*dhammānusārī*, M I 479). In M II 174 an interesting distinction is made between *saccānubodha*, "insight into truth", which is achieved through *paññā*, and *saccānupatti*, "attainment of truth": "there is attainment of truth by following, applying and continually practising these principles" (*Tesaṃ yeva kho ... dhammānaṃ āsevanā bhāvanā bahulīkammaṃ saccānupatti hoti*).

Theoretical understanding is then not sufficient for the

Buddhist disciple. The doctrine is a special view of life, a special interpretation of the world as we experience it, and it should be understood by analysing one's own mind and by application in one's own life. This transcendence of the merely intellectual plane is well expressed in A II 189: a man is wise, if "he can utter a deep, meaningful statement, which is true, rich in meaning, beyond speculation (i.e. more than theoretical, built on personal experience), subtle, understandable to the wise" (*gambhīraṃ atthapadaṃ udāharati santaṃ paṇītaṃ atakkāvacaraṃ nipuṇaṃ paṇḍitavedanīyaṃ*). The practical verification of the doctrines by means of observations and exercises is also sometimes attributed to *paññā*: "The faithful disciple of the Buddha, thus striving and striving again, again and again practising mindfulness and concentration, again and again understanding, gains utter confidence, when he considers: 'As to those things which I had only heard about, now I continually experience them with my own person. I see them as I have penetrated them by understanding'" (*Saddho so ... ariyasāvako evaṃ padahitvā padahitvā evaṃ saritvā saritvā evaṃ samādahitvā samādahitvā evaṃ pajānitvā pajānitvā evaṃ abhisaddahati: Ime kho te dhammā ye me pubbe sutavā ahesuṃ, te dānāhaṃ etarahi kāyena ca phusitvā viharāmi, paññāyaca ativijjha passāmi*, S V 226). The development of a disciple is often described as running through a number of stages, including listening, faith, examining, meditation, understanding and liberation. Although these series of stages vary (see, e.g. M II 173, which will be quoted later, D II 217, M II 262), *paññā* always comes at the end, not in the beginning; *paññā* can therefore not refer to a superficial theoretical understanding, but rather to a realization based on an analysis and observation of the processes within oneself. The ultimate achievement is an act of understanding.

But as an instrument for the ultimate achievement, the concept of understanding should not be conceived too narrowly. What is required is a process of katharsis, or personal purification and transformation. Nibbāna is not only a state of consciousness, and also not only the possession of a certain type of knowledge, but also and mainly a state of personality (Johansson, 1969, p. 111). The transformed state should be characterized by moral

perfection, freedom from desire, hatred and everything that binds us to the world, freedom from ego-involvement, a state of independence, realism and peace. Since the attainment of this state to a great extent involves elimination of undesirable habits, attitudes and traits, katharsis seems to be a suitable designation.

*Paññā* may have a purifying effect: "One is purified through understanding" (*paññāya parisujjhati*, S I 214). "What is understanding for? - Understanding is for superknowledge, for thorough insight, for getting rid of" (*Paññā pana ... kimatthiyā ti? - Paññā kho ... abhiññatthā pariññatthā pahānatthā ti*, M I 293). The last word, *pahāna*, means getting rid of undesirable traits, i.e. katharsis. This is exemplified in A V 39 f: "Greed, hatred, illusion, anger, enmity, hypocrisy, malice, selfishness and wrongful envy are to be abandoned, neither by body nor by speech, but by seeing with understanding again and again should they be abandoned" (*Lobho ... Doso ... Moho ... Kodho ... Upanāho ... Makkho ... Palāso ... Macchariyaṃ ... Pāpikā issā neva kāyena pahātabbā no vācāya, paññāya disvā disvā pahātabbā*). The text continues by an interesting enumeration of the "wrongful desires" which should be eradicated by *paññā*, among others that an unbeliever longs to be known as a believer; that an immoral person wants to pose as virtuous; and that a man of little understanding wants to be known as intelligent (*duppañño samāno 'paññavā ti maṃ jāneyyun'ti icchati*). These are examples of false values that are frequently used as defence mechanisms in order to build up a desirable ego-image. They are a type of *āsava* according to the Buddhist terminology. Mechanisms of this type are usually not conscious and therefore not understood. They can be expelled only by a realistic self-analysis. If the Buddhist disciple is informed through the *dhamma* that he should look out for unrealistic attitudes of these and other types, he may be able to detect them, understand them and eradicate them. This is then a process of purification through *paññā*. Understanding is like the butcher's sharp knife, by which one can cut off defilement, fetter and bond (*kilesa, saṃyojana, bandhana*, M III 275). M III 240 points out that *paññā* should not be neglected. This is further explained as meaning that one should

not identify oneself with the six elements: earth, water, fire, wind, space and consciousness, but see them as they are by means of *paññā* and purify one's mind from them.

## Understanding and Perception

The ultimate katharsis of the Buddhist is the eradication of the inflations (*āsavā*), the superstructure of false values and ego-involvement. This is usually said to be achieved by the aid of *paññā*: *paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti*, "having seen by means of *paññā* the inflations are completely destroyed" (M I 477). *Paññā* is the instrument of the mind (*citta*) for the expulsion of the inflations (D II 123). "I attained (the level of concentration called) the cessation of ideation and sensation and dwelt therein, and as I saw by understanding, my inflations were eradicated" (*saññāvedayita-nirodhaṃ upasampajja viharāmi, paññāya ca me disvā āsavā parik-khayaṃ agamaṃsu*, A IV 448). The highest form of *paññā* is "the knowledge of the cessation of all suffering" (*sabbadukkhakhaye ñāṇa*, M III 245). *Paññā* is directed towards coming and going (*udayattha-gāminiyā paññāya*, D III 237). When a monk comprehends the four Buddhist truths and can see them as clearly as a man standing on the bank of a pure pool can see oysters and shells, gravel and pebbles etc., then his mind (*citta*) is freed from the inflations (M I 279, partly quoted earlier). "The destruction of the inflations should be seen (*sacchikaraṇīya*) by means of *paññā*" (D III 230).

If these quotations are compared, a difficulty seems to appear. In D II 123, *paññā* is said to be an instrument of purification; this agrees well with the analysis of *paññā* given above. But the quotation from D III 230 seems to suggest that *paññā* is a perceptual process, a process of introspective observation. The latter usage would correspond to one of the most common quotation-verbs introducing the so-called arahant-formulas, by means of which disciples used to declare that they had attained the ultimate goal, e.g. *khīṇā jāti ... ti pajānāma*, "we know: 'birth is exhausted'". In both cases it seems that

the goal has been attained by means of meditation and other exercises; after that an introspective observation is made and the transformation is registered through a *perceptual* act. In this case *paññā* would stand for perception of a psychological fact.

This perceptual meaning of *paññā* can be found also in other contexts. According to A IV 402, a person's mind is well fortified by *paññā* when he sees that "my mind is free from desire, from hatred, from illusion" etc. When seeing a form with the eye, one should know, seeing by *paññā*, whether one still has desire, hatred and illusion or not (S IV 139). The mental act seems, in cases like these, mainly to be one of introspection, self-observation. It must, of course, be admitted that no clear border-line can be drawn: most perceptions also involve an understanding, since we usually immediately understand what we see. But a perception may be correct or wrong; the Buddhist texts always stress the necessity of correct perception. *Paññā* may therefore stand for an *intelligent* perception, free from illusion. It must also not be forgotten that the impurities of the mind, which should be removed, according to the Buddhist interpretation originally are impurities of perception. If perceptions are kept free from personal involvement, the *āsavā* will not flow in and desires are not stimulated. The purifying process, referred to earlier, must be directed towards perception and other personal processes; its success or failure may very well also be observed by means of *paññā*. One more quotation will show this: M III 108 describes how a monk attains different levels of *samādhi* and what he learns in the different levels. So he attains "the signless concentration of mind" (*animitta cetosamādhi*), and his mind is pleased with it. "He understands: this signless concentration of mind is created and intended; but what is created and intended, that is impermanent and liable to destruction. When he knows and sees this, his mind is freed from the inflations" (*So evaṃ pajānāti: Ayam pi kho animitto cetosamādhi abhisaṅkhato abhisañcetayito. Yaṃ kho pana kiñci abhisaṅkhataṃ abhisañcetayitaṃ, tad aniccaṃ nirodhadhamman ti pajānāti. Tassa evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato kāmāsavā pi cittaṃ vimuccati* ...). Then he understands: "this mental

image is empty of the inflations" (*Suññam idam saññāgatam kāmāsavenāti pajānāti*, etc.). The function of understanding in this case is to observe and experience that even the level of *samādhi* attained and cherished is something created and therefore a *sankhāra* which has to be transcended. This understanding purifies the act of perceiving or imaging, so that the inflations disappear and only the experience of emptiness remains; a perception free from *āsavā* is a perception free from personal associations. *Paññā* seems in this case to work by gradual abstraction, i.e. the image becomes more and more comprehensive, and more and more of its concrete contents and personal associations are expelled. *Paññā* is katharsis of perception *and* the mind by understanding the nature of the processes and transcending them by abstraction and exclusion. Although the understanding here is produced by meditation, it is used to purify the meditational states themselves.

## Understanding and Motivation

We have pointed out earlier that the texts sometimes make a clear distinction between understanding and motivational factors. This is in good agreement with modern views. Intelligence is usually said to have no motivating force of its own: we all do stupid things although we can understand their consequences in advance. This is, however, not the whole truth. A person who is informed and completely understands that his smoking habits may make him susceptible to illness, will perhaps not stop smoking in spite of his knowledge. But still, his perceptual processes in connection with smoking will have changed. Cigarettes are no longer altogether attractive as they used to be - they are rather ambivalent. The Buddha would have said that an illusion has been dissolved by *paññā*. And the new insight perhaps stimulates a counter-force. The smoker could use this force in order to "guard his senses" either by not looking at cigarettes at all or by looking at them more objectively and realistically and not permitting them to create a desire (this is done by means of *sati*). A case of this type is found in A I

264 f, where two situations are described, one resulting in action and the other in no action (*kamma*). They can be condensed into two series of conditionings, as shown in Fig. 15. When a person thinks about things that he has desired earlier, he is again interested. He cannot stop thinking about these things, and so action is produced. This is how human action is motivated, according to the Buddhist analysis: pleasant experiences lead to attempts to get in contact with that object again. But if he knows the future result (*vipāka*) of activities based on desire, then he is deterred; i.e. the knowledge stimulates a counter-desire, as we perhaps would prefer to say. This would neutralize the first desire, and if the two are equally strong, no action would be released. The passage referred to seems, however, to introduce one more idea: the person tries to strengthen the counterforce by understanding, which here is given a penetrating effect. This perhaps means that by understanding he consciously analyses the desired object, visualizes its worthlessness and dire consequences and tries to eradicate all thought of it.

A similar development is described in A V 3: "A man who knows and sees as it really is, has no need to decide: 'I will feel distaste and lose interest'. It follows naturally that a man who knows and sees feels distaste and loses interest" (*Yathābhūtam ... jānato passato na cetanāya karaṇīyam 'nibbindāmi virajjāmī 'ti. Dhammatā esā ... yaṃ yathābhūtaṃ jānaṃ passaṃ nibbindati virajjati*). "The monk who is freed by understanding is freed by distaste of body, by disinterest in it, by destruction of it, by not building it up: he is called freed by understanding" (*Bhikkhu pi ... paññāvimutto rūpassa nibbidā virāgā nirodhā anupādā vimutto paññāvimutto ti vuccati*, S III 65). By understanding the true nature of the personality factors, their impermanence and instability, negative values are stimulated; these function as forces towards repudiation.

But just as understanding can produce disgust, it may produce joy which can support a similar decision. "When one has known the impermanence of forms, their change, fading away, disappearance, then he sees with right understanding as it really is: 'Formerly as well as now all these forms are imper-

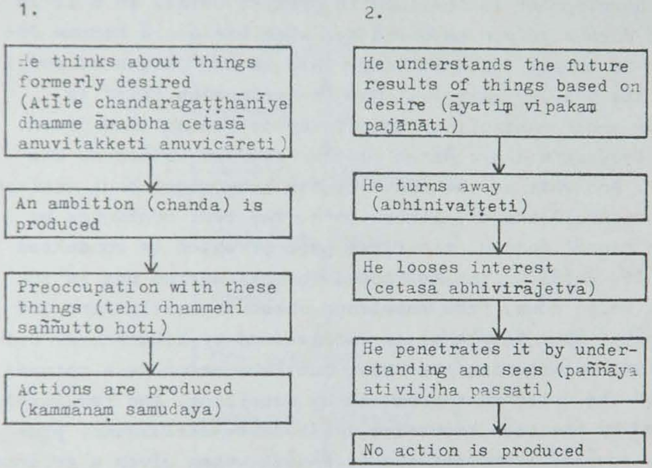



Fig. 15. Action or no action?

manent, painful and liable to change', and then joy arises. Joy such as this is called joy connected with renunciation" (*Rūpānaṃ tveva aniccataṃ viditvā vipariṇāmavirāganirodhaṃ: Pubbe c'eva rūpā etarahi ca sabbe te rūpā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā ti evam etaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato uppajjati somanassaṃ; yaṃ evarūpaṃ somanassaṃ, idaṃ vuccati nekkhammasitaṃ somanassaṃ*, M III 217). Understanding can, therefore, stimulate both negative and positive forces, and this makes its transforming effect easier to understand. A similar development is desribed in greater detail in S II 29 f: "What does a person know and see when his *āsavā* become destroyed? He knows: 'this is body, this is the origin of body, this is its passing away ...' Now in extinction there is knowledge about extinction: this I say is caused (*Yam pissa tam ... khayasmiṃ khaye ñāṇaṃ taṃ sa-upanisaṃ vadāmi no anupanisaṃ*). And what is the cause of the knowledge about extinction? One should answer: Liberation". The text continues by giving a causal series, the first part of which is condensed in Fig. 16. *Paññā* is not mentioned in this series but is implied in *khaye ñāṇa*, "the knowledge about the extinction (of the *āsavā*)." This knowledge is conditioned by liberation, evidently just registering the fact. But liberation is a natural result of the detachment produced by repulsion. And repulsion is caused by the true knowledge (*yathābhūtañāṇadassana*) produced by *samādhi* (concentration): *Samādhi* then gives a personal experience of the impermanent, unsubstantial, unreal and impersonal process-nature of the world: the serenity and emptiness of *samādhi* provides the contrasting background which accentuates the repulsive nature of the world. The series goes on to say that *samādhi* is a natural continuation of the happy feelings produced by the faith that the disciple feels when listening to *dhamma*. But he would not listen, nor feel convinced, without the feeling of suffering produced by his conditioned existence. The series goes on reproducing the standard series of conditionings (*paticcasamuppāda*).

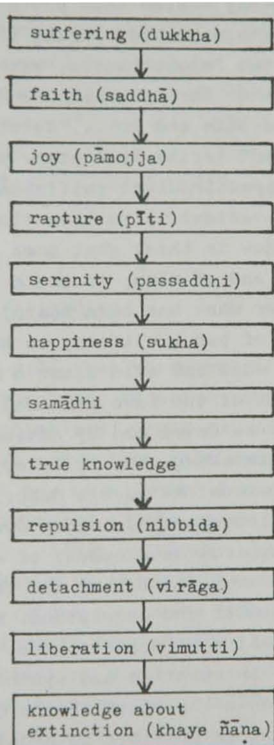



Fig. 16. A way to nibbāna.

he Origin of Understanding

'here is a hint in D III 157 f that understanding may come as a result of actions in former lives (having asked a recluse or brahmin: "What is good, what is bad? What is right, what is wrong?" etc.); this would be a kind of inherited intelligence. But it is more commonly stated that *paññā* can be acquired and developed by certain methods during the present life. D III 284 ff enumerates "eight causes, eight conditions which lead to attaining the so far unattained understanding that forms part of the good life and to ... developing ... that which has been attained" (*Aṭṭha hetū aṭṭha paccayā ādibrahmacariyakāya paññāya appaṭiladdhāya paṭilābhāya paṭiladdhāya ... bhāvanāya ... saṃvattanti*): to live close to the Master; to ask teachers: "How is this? What does this mean?"; to attain serenity of body and of mind; to train oneself in moral behaviour; to remember what has been heard; to activate energy for the elimination of bad qualities; to be mindful and remember what has been done and said after a long time; to observe the rise and fall of the five personality factors. Understanding can certainly be developed by asking questions, by learning, observing and thinking, but it is evident that *paññā* here refers to the personal katharsis described above.

In M II 173, *paññā* is incorporated into a dynamic series (see Fig. 3), showing the typical development of a disciple of the Buddha. The disciple must first test the teacher, then listen to the teaching, remember and understand. When he has investigated the meaning of it and found it true, he will be motivated to make the final integrating and synthesising effort, and then he sees by *paññā* the truth of the doctrine.

Many texts imply that it is possible to acquire *paññā*. One of the "best of good deeds" (*aggaṃ atthacariyānaṃ*) is "the inciting, instilling, establishing the attainment of understanding in the unwise" (*duppaññaṃ paññāsampadāya samādapeti niveseti patiṭṭhāpeti*, A IV 364). "Only by knowing the true norm of the good is understanding acquired" (*sataṃ saddhammam aññāya, paññā labbhati nāññato*, S I 56). Four conditions contribute to the attainment of understanding (*Cattāro dhammā* ...

*paññāpaṭilābhāya saṃvattanti*): "following the good, listening to the true doctrine, systematic attention and living in accordance with the precepts of the doctrine" (*sappurisasaṃsevo saddhammasavanaṃ yonisomanasikāro dhammānudhammapaṭipatti*, S V 411). Moral conduct (*sīla*) is important for understanding: "Where there is moral conduct, there is also understanding" (D I 124). Different types of meditation are also important: *sati* (mindfulness with regard to the body, *kāyagatāsati*, A I 45), *vipassanā* ("If introspection is cultivated, what will it lead to? - *Paññā* is developed", A I 61) and *samādhi* ("Great becomes the fruit, great the advantage of *paññā* when it is supported by *samādhi*", *samādhiparibhāvitā paññā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā*, D II 123).

## The Results of Understanding

We have found that *paññā* has three main functions. It may mean intellectual understanding, effected through reasoning and mental effort to see relations. Or it may produce a personal experience, a personal conviction that something is true. Or, finally, the result may be a personal purification. These types seem largely to correspond to the three types distinguished in D III 219: *Cintā-mayā paññā, suta-mayā paññā, bhāvanā-mayā paññā*, "Understanding produced by thought, by what is heard, by application". The first refers to purely intellectual reasoning; the second probably refers to the guidance to understanding which is offered by the Buddhist doctrines; and the third type is produced through meditation: this can, as we have seen, result in both personal experience of the truth of the Buddhist teachings, and in liberating effects.

The goal is *vimutti*, "freedom". This is sometimes said to be of two types, *cetovimutti*, "freedom of mind", and *paññāvimutti*, "freedom through understanding". A I 61, condensed in Fig. 17, explains how the two are developed. The figure shows that *cetovimutti* is the same as freedom from desire and that it is attained by practising "calm", i.e. *samādhi*. *Paññāvimutti* means freedom from ignorance and is attained through *vipassanā*,

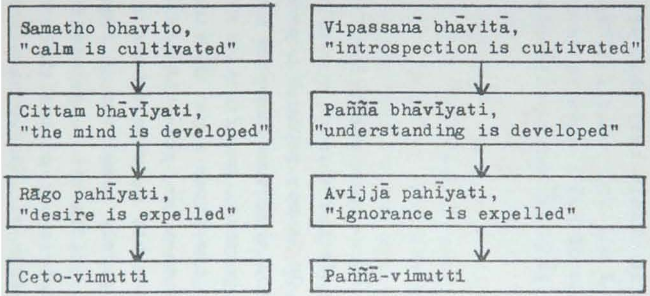



Fig. 17. Two types of freedom.

i.e. introspective observations of the impermanence, impersonality, suffering etc. of all processes.

Other definitions of *paññāvimutti* are found. "A monk who is freed by understanding is freed by distaste of body (and the other factors), by disinterest in them, by destruction of them, by not building them up: he is called freed by understanding" (S III 65, quoted before). "Somebody lives without having experienced personally those peaceful deliverances which are formless having transcended forms; but since he has seen by understanding, his inflations are destroyed; he is called a man freed by understanding" (*ekacco puggalo ye te santā vimokhā atikkamma rūpe āruppā te na kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti. Ayaṃ vuccati ... puggalo paññāvimutto*, M I 477). The "deliverances", *vimokhā*, are levels of meditation partly identical with the levels of *samādhi*, and therefore these definitions do not contradict the one given before. "A man freed by understanding has no illusions" (*paññāvimuttassa na santi mohā*, SN 847). "How does one become well freed by understanding? He understands: 'Desire, hatred and illusion are driven out from me, cut off at the root, become like a palmtree stump, annihilated, unable to grow again in the future'" (*Kathañ ca ... bhikkhu suvimutta-pañño hoti? Idha ... bhikkhu 'Rāgo ... Doso ... Moho me pahīno ucchinnamūlo tālāvatthukato anabhāvaṃ gato āyatiṃ anuppāda-dhammo'ti pajānāti*, D III 270). Since *avijjā* is sometimes defined as closely related to *moha*, the statement quoted from SN is natural. In the next quotation the knowledge of the eradication of *rāga* is said to characterize *paññāvimutti*, not as in A I 61 *cetovimutti*. D II 70 says that "when a monk has understood as they really are the coming to be and passing away, the pleasures and miseries of, and the way of escape from these seven stations of consciousness and these two spheres, he becomes free through not building; this monk is called freed by understanding" (*Yato kho ... bhikkhu imāsañ ca sattannaṃ viññāṇaṭṭhitīnaṃ imesañ ca dvinnaṃ āyatanānaṃ samudayañ ca atthagamañ ca assādañ ca ādīnavañ ca nissaraṇañ ca yathābhūtaṃ viditvā anupādā vimutto hoti, ayaṃ vuccati ... bhikkhu paññā-vimutto*). The "seven stations of consciousness" refer to the *kāma*-world, some of the heavens and some of the lower

levels of *samādhi* where rebirth is possible, and the "two spheres" refer to two of the highest levels of *samādhi*. This passage presupposes at least a theoretical knowledge of the levels of *samādhi* and probably more than that, since the point is to understand the true nature, transitoriness and meaninglessness of these worlds of existence. Also A IV 452 seems to imply knowledge of all the nine levels of *samādhi*, in this case described as levels of concentration, not worlds of rebirth. Then comes a parallel description of a man who is *ubhatobhāgavimutta*, "freed both ways", the only difference being that the person freed by understanding "experiences through understanding", but the one freed both ways "continues to feel it by his person and experiences it through understanding" (*naṃ kāyena phassitvā viharati, paññāya ca naṃ pajānāti*). Possibly the difference here is that in the former case the acquaintance with *samādhi* is more theoretical, but in the second based on personal experience.

In so far as it is possible to integrate these texts, it would seem that the person freed by understanding is one who has understood by introspection, and therefore by experience, if perhaps not by practice, the conditioned and transitory nature of the world, one's own personality, the rebirth-worlds and even the levels of *samādhi*; since illusion is the root of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series as well as the *āsavā*, he has got a tool with which he can master both. And so the personal katharsis is completed.

## SUMMARY

A short formulation of the main ideas in this book may be useful.

1. The world according to early Buddhism is a perceived, conscious world. It is therefore a personal creation, impermanent and dynamic, i.e. of the same nature as the perceptual processes through which it is constituted and which are a necessary part of it. There are no "things" in Buddhism, only processes.

2. Ordinary human life is a stream of dynamic processes flowing in twelve channels, corresponding to the twelve links in the standard formulation of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, "dependent origination". There is a relation of dependence between the channels, but every process is also conditioned by another process.

3. All processes can be broken down into acts (*sankhārā*) which are dynamic, psychophysical, personal and have a moral aspect (often called *kamma* when the moral aspect is to be stressed). Each *sankhāra* is an act of the human mind (*citta*): it is conscious (*viññāṇa*), can be one of several types (*nāmarūpa*) and belong to one or several of the six sense-modalities (*saḷāyatana*). There could be no sense-modalities without a conscious differentiation (*nāmarūpa*); the conscious differentiation would not exist without a conscious dimension; and since consciousness is dynamic and functions in the form of processes, it would be impossible without *sankhārā*. Because the human constitution is such, impressions (*phassa*) can be received, sensations and feelings (*vedanā*) can be experienced and cravings (*taṇhā*) can be felt. By engaging in and accumulating material received through the sense channels (*upādāna*), a personality is built up (*bhava*), and preparations for a new birth (*jāti*) go on continually. The expectations of rebirth and preparations for it form (together with the expectations of illness, old age and death and together with life's frustrations generally) the suffering (*dukkha*) that is the chief characteristic of life. But the whole sequence of processes goes on only as long as ignorance and false attitudes (*avijjā*) prevent the individual from seeing the causal connection and the methods to be applied for elimination.

4. The mind (*citta*) can be seen as the carrier of all these processes. The Buddhist training aims at making the mind pure and stable. This means that all the *paṭiccasamuppāda*-processes are "calmed" or disappear. But the mind has also no substance and is not an ego.

5. Since ignorance (*avijjā*) is found at the bottom of most undesirable states, the chief remedy should be knowledge. It is actually called *paññā*, which is not exactly knowledge but understanding, a clear understanding of the Buddhist view of suffering and its background, especially an understanding based on personal experience, won through meditation and pure perception, and forming part of a personal katharsis.

6. Ignorance (*avijjā*) is one of the *āsavā*, lit. "influxes", although here the translation "inflations" is preferred. The inflations are four very basic personality traits, here called (a) inflation of unrealism (*avijjāsava*), (b) love-inflation (*kāmāsava*), (c) growth-inflation (*bhavāsava*), (d) theory-inflation (*diṭṭhāsava*). They express tendencies to inflate the ego with four types of contents: unrealistic values, sensuality, preparations for the future, theoretical constructions.

7. Three versions of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* series have perception as their starting point, with its four constituting factors: stimulus, sense-organ, consciousness and contact:

(a) One explains "the origin of the world", i.e. perception as it usually is (see Fig. 1), with elements of feeling, distorting desires and subjective additions.

(b) A second sequence (Fig. 2) explains how latent dispositions (*anusaya*) are activated by certain characteristics of perceived things.

(c) The third sequence (Fig. 14) shows how the cognitive process itself easily goes astray and ends in associative thought or imaginative daydreaming (*papañca*).

All these series show how perception is influenced by distorting elements or lead to undesirable activities. Without these impurities, the process may rather lead to understanding (*paññā*).

## NOTES

### 1. The Psychological Background

[1] More about the subjective constructions in ordinary, normal perception can be read in e.g. Hochberg (1964) and Blake and Ramsey (1951, chapter 5 and 6).

### 2. The One Reality

[1] I therefore think that Govinda (1961, p. 54) is right when he writes: "It is our will, our ardent desire which creates the world in which we live, and the organism which corresponds to it".

[2] Cf. Govinda (1961, p. 142): "Thus the *anicca*-idea does not make the world less real, but it shows, on the contrary, that the world exclusively consists in action. Nowhere is stagnation, nowhere limitation. Nothing exists for itself or separately in itself. There is nothing constant; but instead of a world filled with dead things, there is a *living* cosmos which finds its counterpart in the consciousness of each individual ..."

[3] Sarathchandra (1958, p. 103) observes, referring to this text: "*Rūpa* is not interpreted as mere matter, but as organic sensations. The individual is thus reduced to a bundle of sensations, these sensations including his entire knowledge of the external world as well".

[4] Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda (1974, p. 31) writes in a discussion of the same text: "This complex character of name-and-form in relation to contact indicates that Buddhism does not recognize a dichotomy between mind and matter".

[5] This has also been observed by Sarathchandra (1958, p. 11): "... there is no difference between the impression, the awareness of the external world, and the external world itself. The world exists as long as the senses continue to function. It has no independent reality."

3. The Dynamic Act

[1] "Things" is a favourite word with translators of Buddhist texts. It is used for both *sankhāra* and *dhamma* quite frequently and is also often added in contexts where there is no equivalent in the Pali text, for instance in the common phrase *yathābhūtañāṇadassana*, "knowledge and vision of things as they really are", and in *kāmūpādāna*, "grasping at the things of sense". In this way, an unrealistic adaptation to Western ways of thinking has been performed. The word may sometimes be convenient, but strictly speaking there are no "things" in the Western sense in Buddhism. There are only the fleeting, changing, conditioned conscious processes. They are "produced by the inner sense" (*manomaya*, Dh 1).

[2] This has been observed also by Schumann (1957, p. 49).

4. Consciousness

[1] I assume that this is the meaning and that something to this effect has been left out in the text. The PTS edition goes on: *Nimittassādagadhitaṃ vā bhikkhave viññāṇaṃ tiṭṭhamānaṃ tiṭṭheyya anuvyañjanassādagadhitaṃ vā*, "(But) if *viññāṇa* is firmly bound by the satisfaction either of the marks or the details, then it might be established ... and he may be born in a purgatory or as an animal". The text as translated by Woodward is incomprehensible.

5. Growth and Development

[1] The accumulative effect is by S.P. de Silva (1969, p. 99) attributed to *bhava*: "Both the active process of action (*Kammabhava*) and the passive process of accumulation (*Upapattibhava*) are categorized together under becoming (*Bhava*)".

7. Motivation

[1] This translation will be resented by many who are used to "love" as the equivalent to *mettā*. There are, however, several reasons for the proposed change: 1) *Mettā* means "friendliness", an adequate word that should be kept, 2) "Love" is, in all its meanings, a strong word, suggesting emotional involvement - this is not a Buddhist ideal. Even "Christian love" is an emotional sentiment far removed from *mettā*. 3) "Love" has recently been subject to a semantic transformation in the sensual direction which makes it impossible as equivalent to *mettā*. So why accept two quite opposite meanings of the word "love"?

[2] Cf. Padmasiri de Silva, 1973, p. 95.

8. Personality

[1] Lama Anagarika Govinda has also observed this (1961, p. 50): "'Birth' (*jāti*) in the Buddhist sense is not merely a particular single moment in each life, not only the physical process of being born (*sañjāti*) or conception (*okkanti*) in the physiological sense, but the 'conception', the 'conceiving' that is called forth continually through the senses, which affects the appearance or manifestation of the aggregates of existence (*khandhānam pātubhāvo*), the seizing of the sense-domains (*āyatanānam paṭilābho*), the continuous materialization and new karmic entanglement".

[2] SN 874, which will be discussed in a later chapter, says: "Who is conscious of neither an image (*saññā*) nor a false image and is not unconscious and not conscious of a disappeared image - to one in this state form (*rūpa*) disappears". Probably a state of *samādhi* is described. In this state all images disappear, and therefore form in the sense of perceptions and images. But probably *rūpa* is meant to include even the meditator's own body.

[3] In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, the supreme god Brahman is said to be like an extinguished fire (Radhakrishnan, 1953, p. 717).

10. The Intellectual Superstructure

[1] Sarathchandra (1958, p. 10) has the following interpretation: "The natural associations of this image would be those of a deer following a mirage in the belief that it is a pool of water. The deer is thirsty for water, and is deluded by the wrong thing, just as a man is thirsty for happiness and seeks to attain it by following the things of the senses". Bhikkhu Ñāṇananda (1971, p. 22) translates by "fool".

11. Understanding

[1] Although it has been used by Filliozat (in Renou et Filliozat, 1953, p. 546): "L'intelligence (*paññā* ...) est le discernement des choses, la faculté de prise de conscience des réalités ...."

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This book has been based on the following Pali works, as published by the Pali Text Society. The abbreviations used are given within brackets.

- Dīgha Nikāya (D)
- Majjhima Nikāya (M)
- Samyutta Nikāya (S)
- Anguttara Nikāya (A)
- Dhammapada (Dh)
- Sutta Nipāta (SN)
- Udāna (U)
- Thera-gāthā (Ta)
- Therī-gāthā (Ti)

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# INDEX OF TECHNICAL TERMS

# INDEX OF QUOTATIONS FROM NIKĀYA TEXTS

The main purpose of this index is to help the reader find quotations discussed in more than one context, but all important Pāli quotations have been included. Numerals refer to pages in the Pāli editions published by the Pāli Text Society, except for Dh, SN and Ta where they refer to number of stanza. Numerals within brackets refer to pages in this book.

*Anguttara Nikāya*



*Dhammapada*

*Dīgha Nikāya*



*Majjhima Nikāya*

*Samyutta Nikāya*

*Sutta Nipāta*



*Theragāthā*



*Udāna*

This book is a psychologist's attempt to understand what the Buddha meant by "dependent origination" (*paṭiccasumappāda*, sometimes translated as "causality"). Those who are familiar with Theravàda Buddhism have met the famous series of twelve links in the chain of causation (*nidanas*) of which each is said to be the condition of the next one, and the background of this book is exactly the challenging, teasing incomprehensibility of this series. The author has collected all passages in the Nikāyas or scriptural literature which throw light on the meaning of conditioned sequences, accepting only those explanations which agree with the facts in the Nikayas. The result of these investigations is that the dynamic aspect of the Buddha's psychology must have been much more extreme and all-pervading than is usually believed today.

Dr. Johansson was a Swedish research psychologist who had studied Sanskrit and Pali at the University of Lund and in the Orient. He was an eminent scholar closely associated with the University of Uppsala, and author of other works on Buddhism.

**Also published in the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series:**

No. 14. Rune E. A. Johansson: Pali Buddhist Texts

Pali is one of the Middle Indian idioms and the classical language of Theravada Buddhism. It is therefore important both to linguists and to students of Buddhism. This book is a simple introduction to it; but it is not a book about the language – it is a plunge directly into it. It centres on a collection of original texts, each selected as an especially important or beautiful formulation of some Buddhist idea. By means of vocabulary, translation and commentary, each text is explained so concretely that it can be read directly, without boring preparations. Much attention is devoted to the many technical terms which have frustrated so many Western explorers of Buddhism. For reference, a grammar is provided, and the linguist will find Sanskrit parallels to many of the words and a special chapter comparing the two languages.